DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 162 194 CG 012 940

AUTHOR	Petersilia, Joan; And Others
TITLE	Criminal Careers of Habitual Felons.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (Dept. of Justice/LEAA), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Jul 78
GRANT	75-NI-99-0095
NOTE	186p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402 (Stock no. 027-000-00696-5)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$10.03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Anti Social Behavior; *Behavior Development; Correctional Rehabilitation; *Criminals; Drug Addiction; Individual Characteristics; *Prisoners; *Recidivism; Research Projects

ABSTRACT

The criminal development of habitual felons was examined by means of lengthy interviews with 49 prison inmates, all armed robbers serving at least their second prison terms. Results are not considered generalized, but should be regarded as 49 case studies. Although some of the findings were consistent with traditional images (juvenile offender transformed into professional criminal), the dominant finding was diversity, both in offenders' personalities and in their conduct. A key conclusion is that many of the traditional assumptions about the development of habitual offenders need to be reconsidered and restudied. (Author/JLL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED162194

C G

CRIMINAL CAREERS OF HABITUAL FELONS

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

CG 012940

National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
U. S. Department of Justice

2

CRIMINAL CAREERS OF HABITUAL FELONS

by
Joan Petersilia
Peter W. Greenwood
Marvin Lavin

July 1978

National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
U. S. Department of Justice

National Institute of Law Enforcement
and Criminal Justice
Blair G. Ewing, Acting Director

Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
James M.H. Gregg, Acting Administrator

This report was prepared under Grant No. 75-NI-99-0095 awarded to the Rand Corporation by the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U. S. Department of Justice, under the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 as amended. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U. S. Department of Justice.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

Stock Number 027-000-00625-5

PREFACE

This report is the first in a series resulting from Rand's continuing program of research on habitual offenders, supported by a Research Agreements Program (RAP) grant from the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice (grant 75-NI-99-0095). The research program addresses the behavior and attitudes of serious habitual offenders, their interactions with the criminal justice system, and the responses of the system to them.

The study results are being released at this time because they are intriguing, policy-relevant, and in some instances counter to traditional criminological thought. It is hoped that other researchers will be encouraged to test these results and explore their implications, as the authors will be doing in future research.

The study reported here is based on interviews with 49 prison inmates—all armed robbers and serving at least their second prison term—to systematically examine the development of their criminal careers and their reasons for continuing in crime. By usual standards of quantitative analysis, a sample of 49 is too small to permit meaningful inferences about the larger offender population. And, indeed, we have no intention of generalizing the findings. Because of the comprehensiveness and quality of the information—gained from lengthy interviews rather than from an entirely closed-ended written questionnaire—it is more appropriate to regard the results as 49 *case studies*. Seen in that light, and considering that most existing case studies rely on a sample of one or a few (such as E. H. Sutherland's *The Professional Thief*), this study makes a significant contribution to research on criminal careers.

The report should be of interest to policymakers concerned with the problems of identifying and counteracting career criminals. The research should also be of interest to criminologists and other analysts of criminal career development.

Forthcoming reports in this series are tentatively entitled *The Disposition of Felony Arrests and the Effects of Alternative Sentences* (R-2199-DOJ) and *Doing Crime: A Survey of California Prison Inmates* (R-2120-DOJ).

Author's note

Following the release of this study, there has been a propensity on the part of some readers to generalize its results to all prison inmates or even to all criminals. The authors are therefore prompted to reiterate a point that appears repeatedly in the text: this study is an in-depth examination of a limited sample of career criminals who were serving a prison sentence as a result of a robbery conviction and who had served at least one prior prison term. Offenders with these characteristics constitute approximately 17 percent of the California prison population. The restrictions on the sample should be kept constantly in mind when interpreting the findings. The characteristics of offenders who have been actively involved in crime for 20 years on the average are not necessarily those of criminal in general.

SUMMARY

In response to high urban crime levels and recent evidence that a small minority of persons commits the majority of serious crimes, policymakers have been shifting concern away from rehabilitation toward deterrence, punishment, and incapacitation of serious habitual offenders. This study provides new and unique evidence—for instance on individual offense rates, probabilities of arrest, conviction, and incarceration, and motivation for crime—for use in assessing the impact of the new policies on the development of criminal careers.

The study results are being released at this time because they are intriguing, policy-relevant, and in some instances counter to traditional criminological thought. It is hoped that other researchers will be encouraged to test these results and explore their implications, as the authors will be doing in future research.

THE APPROACH

The study focuses on the criminal careers of 49 inmates of a medium-security prison in California. All are serving time for armed robbery, and all have served at least one prior prison term. The data were gathered from structured interviews with the offenders and from their official criminal records ("rap sheets").

By usual standards of quantitative analysis, a sample of 49 is too small to permit meaningful inferences about the larger offender population. And, indeed, we have no intention of generalizing the findings. Because of the comprehensiveness and quality of the information—gained from lengthy interviews rather than from an entirely closed-ended written questionnaire—it is more appropriate to regard the results as 49 *case studies*. Seen in that light, and considering that most existing case studies rely on a sample of one or a few (such as E. H. Sutherland's *The Professional Thief*), this study makes a significant contribution to research on criminal careers.

The Sample

The interviewees averaged nearly 39 years of age; none was younger than 25. A quarter were from ethnic minorities. The sample had completed an average of eight years of school, slightly less than state prison inmates nationwide. According to prison records, approximately 80 percent of the sample had an intelligence level of normal or bright-normal.

The average age at which these offenders committed their first serious juvenile offense was 14, although seven respondents reported committing no crimes as a juvenile. The average time of first arrest was about one year later. Thirty-two offenders were confined to a jail, reformatory, or prison before the age of 18. As for school attendance, the sample was divided evenly among those who reported good attendance, occasional absence, and habitual truancy. Broken homes, lower economic status, and sibling criminal records were characteristic of many but not most in the sample; nor did such factors explain differences in later criminal behavior.

Nearly 75 percent of the sample had served at least two prior prison terms, and 34 percent had served three or more. Thus, judging from the frequency, gravity, and length of involvement with the criminal justice system, the sample was composed of offenders of sustained seriousness.

The Interview Instrument

The interview instrument was a highly structured questionnaire consisting of both open- and closed-ended questions. To allow the systematic tracing of changes during a career, it was administered in three sections corresponding to three contiguous career periods: (1) *juvenile*, from the first offense committed through the first juvenile incarceration, or, if no juvenile incarceration, to age 18, (2) *young adult*, from release after the first juvenile incarceration through the first adult incarceration, and (3) *adult*, from release after the first adult incarceration to the time of the interview in the current prison term. Approximately 200 questions were repeated in each career section.

Qualifications of the Approach

By restricting the sample to offenders who ultimately became armed robbers, we attempted to limit the variability in career development expected in a more general sample. As a result, even though the respondents committed a wide variety of crimes, the findings cannot be generalized to a wider population than this sample represents. A sample of burglars might reveal much different career patterns.

Some may consider the use of self-reports for assessing criminal activity another limitation; we view it as a strength. Without self-reports, one must rely entirely on official records, with all of their omissions and biases. Since according to national statistics fewer than 20 percent of all major crimes result in arrest, self-reports can greatly expand the picture of the true situation, especially for frequent offenders.

We are convinced that most of the interviewees responded honestly about their crimes. Comparing their self-reported arrests and convictions against the official records, we found that they had reported 63 percent of their arrests, 74 percent of their recorded convictions, and 88 percent of the convictions ending in significant incarceration (and therefore more memorable). Although this comparison does not provide a valid check on the actual extent of their crime, it gives an indication of general accuracy.

MAJOR FINDINGS

We sought to illuminate the development of serious criminal careers in the hope of identifying vulnerable times when appropriate interventions by the criminal justice system might best have reduced the offenders' threat to the community. Initially we were optimistic that such points could be identified, for earlier research had suggested that habitual offenders tend to follow a common maturation process. We expected the interview data to reveal systematic development patterns in which juvenile offenders were transformed into adult professional criminals. Moreover, we expected the adult professionals to pursue crime as a preferred occupation, continually developing their skills, increasing their profits, and becoming more specialized. It is now clear that this is too simplistic a notion. The reality of criminal career development is much more complex and diverse. Although some of our empirical findings were consistent with the traditional images, overall, even in a sample as small and select as this, the dominant finding was diversity—both in the offenders' personalities and in their conduct. Thus, a key conclusion of this study is that many of the traditional assumptions about the development of criminal careers need to be reconsidered.

Extent and Patterns of Criminality

The sample of 49 habitual offenders reported committing over 10,500 crimes of the nine types considered: auto theft (1,492), purse snatching (25), grand theft (993), burglary (2,331), robbery (855), aggravated assault (188), forgery (995), drug sales (3,620), and rape (6). Since the average criminal career was about 20 years long, and half the time was spent in prison, the average respondent committed about 20 crimes per year of street time.

The offense rate varied considerably by crime class. The average number of *violent* crimes (rape, assault, robbery, purse snatching) committed per year of street time was 1.8; *safety* crimes (violent crimes plus burglary), 5.9; and *nondrug crimes* (safety crimes plus auto theft, grand theft, and forgery), 11.9.

The offense rate was related to maturation. The number of self-reported offenses committed per month of street time noticeably declined as the sample grew older. Specifically, the juvenile-period average of 3.2 serious crimes per month of street time decreased to 1.5 in the young adult period and to 0.6 in the adult period. Declining offense rates were also shown in each crime class except violent crimes, which is dominated by robbery. The latter anomaly probably owes to the sample-selection criterion that the current incarceration be for a robbery conviction. Previous studies of criminal behavior, based on official records, have found that participation in crime declines with age. A unique contribution of this study is the finding that the level of criminal activity diminishes even among those who remain active in crime.

Though the level declined, there was a certain steadiness about this sample's crime. Asked how much time passed after their release from incarceration before they started committing crimes again, the respondents indicated a median time of 4-5 months after the first juvenile incarceration and 2-3 months after the first adult incarceration. Once crime was resumed, the median time until first arrest was 3-5 months for both career periods. Slightly over half of the sample said they had serious intentions of not returning to crime during those months; the rest said they either intended to return to crime (25 percent) or were unsure about it. Most believed that their resumption of crime could not have been deterred. For those who believed it could have been deterred, certainty of apprehension would have been the most influential factor.

Following a conventional pattern, these offenders progressed from predominantly auto theft and burglary in the juvenile period to a greater proportion of robberies and forgeries in the adult years. The majority said they had switched to robbery because it required little preparation and few tools, was easy to do, seldom required hurting anyone, and offered unlimited potential targets. Also, robbery could be committed alone, eliminating the risk of being implicated by a partner. The offenders saw "take" as the primary influencing factor in deciding whether or not to commit a certain crime, the risks involved being secondary.

The majority of the sample did not specialize in a certain type of crime but switched crime types frequently. Whatever modus operandi or selectivity of targets an offender developed was usually a continuation of his most recent experience rather than a result of careful strategy.

Interactions with the Criminal Justice System

Arrest Rate. Comparing respondents' reports of crimes committed with the rap sheets, we found that only a small percentage of crimes resulted in recorded arrest: 3 percent of the nondrug felonies in the juvenile period; 6 percent in the young adult period; and 20 percent in the adult period. The rising arrest rate is partly explained by the increasing incidence of crimes against persons, which are solved more often than property crimes. However, the arrest rate for burglary, a property crime, also rose from 8 percent in the young adult period to 29 percent in the adult period. (Note also that 11 percent of the robberies in the young adult period culminated in arrest, compared with 21 percent of those in the adult period.)

Conviction Rate. After arrest for any type of offense, the proportion who were convicted increased from 0.54 in the juvenile period to 0.78 in the adult period. The proportion whose arrests culminated in incarceration rose from 0.39 in the juvenile period to 0.71 in the adult period. Thus, while offense rates decreased markedly over time, the probabilities of arrest, conviction, and incarceration per offense all tended to increase.

Prosecutorial Treatment. Although these offenders all qualified for special charges of prior offenses to be filed against them, prosecutors did not routinely use such special allegations in the proceedings before the offenders' most recent conviction. About 60 percent were threatened with the filing of priors, but only 40 percent had such allegations actually filed; and about half the priors that were filed were dismissed or stricken. Thus, the prosecutor's use of priors appeared to serve ends other than only obtaining a harsher sentence.

Prosecutors threatened only one-third of the sample with application of California's habitual offender statute. Formal charging of habitual offender status was rare.

Prison Experience. Only about a quarter of the sample said that they had had trouble adjusting to prison life. When they were juveniles, the trouble arose primarily from problems of getting along with other inmates. With advancing age and more frequent incarceration, the main source of difficulty was not other inmates but the offender's own feelings—for example, a realization that life is short and a desire to be on the outside, living it.

In their three major incarcerations, about half the sample said they had participated in a formal prison rehabilitation program—mainly vocational training, education, or group counseling. Only a small minority had taken part in individual counseling or a drug or alcohol program. The proportion who found the program useful rose from about half in the juvenile and young adult periods to nearly 90 percent in the adult period. Vocational training was the program most favored.

Although these offenders were arrested for relatively few of the offenses they committed, once arrested, they paid heavily in length of incarceration. The average time served was 2.4 years for the first prison term, 3.3 years for the second, 3.0 years for the third, 3.7 years for the fourth, and 5.7 years for the fifth.

Postrelease Experience. Most of the sample were released on parole after their juvenile and young-adult incarcerations. Less than one-quarter felt that they were monitored strictly by their parole officer after the juvenile release; this proportion increased to about half after the young adult release. Only a small proportion said they were deterred from reinvolvement in crime by their parole officer's supervision. Few believed that they were subjected to selective police surveillance after release from prison, so the deterrent effect of this factor was minimal.

Asked what they needed most when released from prison, the interviewees most often answered "someone who cared" (juvenile period) and "employment" (adult periods).

Criminal Sophistication

These offenders did not routinely plan and prepare for their property crimes. Approximately half used little or no planning and preparation; only one-quarter used a moderate amount. For the typical offender, pre-crime planning was limited to visiting the location and, less often, staking out the target. Such measures as wearing a disguise, developing a new identity, and obtaining a special car were uncommon.

Judging by a simple planning-sophistication index devised for the study, the sample as a whole slightly increased in sophistication over time. However, the offenders who were the most sophisticated tended to develop sophistication at an early age; it was not necessarily the product of a long career in crime.

The assumption that habitual offenders develop a network of persons to assist them in crimes appears misplaced. These offenders tended to work alone more frequently as their careers advanced. In fact, the more sophisticated the offender, the more likely he was to work alone, being unwilling to share the profits or risk betrayal.

Contrary to the assumption that an offender's illicit profits grow with his experience, these offenders, even in the later phases of their careers, averaged only a few thousand dollars per year. Few were well rewarded for their criminal acts.

On the whole, this sample of habitual offenders, despite their extensive and prolonged involvement in criminal activity, did not become substantially more sophisticated in it as time progressed.

Motivation for Crime

Involvement with Drugs and Alcohol. Although the data are not sufficient to establish causal linkages, drugs and alcohol clearly played a prominent role in a majority of these criminal careers. By official records, about half of the sample had a history of drug involvement; by their own statements, about two-thirds had regularly used drugs or alcohol or both. During the adult periods, fully 60 percent were under the influence of alcohol or drugs when committing crimes; and the desire for money to buy drugs and alcohol was the single most frequently cited reason for committing crimes (cited by one-third of the sample).

As for associations between drugs and alcohol involvement and other offender characteristics, the offenders involved with alcohol alone—compared with those involved with drugs alone, both drugs and alcohol, or neither—committed crimes less often but were more likely to be arrested. The offenders involved with both drugs and alcohol had the highest offense rates.

Peer Influence. This sample showed a marked change in peer influence as their criminal careers progressed. Nearly half reported that, as juveniles, their behavior was primarily peer-directed rather than self-directed. In the following two periods the peer-directed proportion diminished to 20 and 12 percent, respectively.

Employment Performance. The sample had uneven and generally weak employment performance. About half depended on a legitimate job for their usual source of income, but the earnings tended to be fairly low. About 10 percent had little or no interest in a regular job throughout their careers. Fewer than 15 percent thought that loss of employment had contributed to their criminal activity.

About half the sample seriously looked for work after release from their major convictions. The proportion who took a long time finding work (say, four months or more) or failed to find work was about 30 percent after the juvenile release and about 20 percent after the young adult release. (Nearly the same percentages reported that they were not at all serious about looking for work after release.)

Using a criterion for "better employment" developed in the study, we found that the better-employed offenders in the sample:

- Tended to be less active in crime in the adult periods but had neither more nor fewer crime-free intervals than the other offenders.
- Committed fewer crimes against persons than the other offenders in the adult periods.
- Were more likely to be alcohol-involved and less likely to be both drugs- and alcohol-involved than the other offenders in every career period.

Crime-Free Intervals. While half to two-thirds of the sample experienced crime-free intervals at some time in their careers, the duration was only 10 to 30 percent of the street time. Furthermore, the reasons given for the temporary cessation of crime were not profound. A crime-free interval was most often regarded as a vacation or an obligation to a family member or girlfriend.

Violence

Though these offenders committed a higher rate of crimes against persons later in their careers, the proportion who actually injured their victims declined over time. On the other hand, the offenders' statements about their willingness to injure a victim indicated no lessening of the risk to victims as the offenders became older and more experienced.

Habitual Offender Types: Intensives and Intermittents

During the interviews, we perceived two broad types of offenders. What we call the *intensive* offenders were the "heavies" who saw themselves as professional criminals for at least part of their careers. Their criminal activity was sustained over long periods and was consciously directed toward a specific purpose, be it high living, support of a drug habit, or repayment of debts. Pre-crime planning was not necessarily a hallmark of this group (nearly all the sample was weak in planning), but the intensive type paid more attention to avoiding arrest than the others.

The other, more frequently encountered type we called the *intermittent* offenders. Most did not view themselves as professional criminals. Their criminal activity had an irregular and opportunistic character, and the monetary gain was often minimal. Their responses suggest that they were frequently oblivious to the risks and consequences of their criminal acts. This seeming indifference, compared with the posture of the intensive type, disposed them to a higher rate of arrest. In a sense, they were the "losers."

To bring these qualitative impressions of a dichotomy into sharper focus, we applied various measures of criminal activity to the sample. By means of a crime seriousness index, we distinguished 16 intensive offenders (33 percent of the sample) and 33 intermittent offenders (67 percent of the sample). The adult offense rate exceeded one crime per month of street time for 94 percent of the intensive offenders but for only 21 percent of the intermittent offenders. Most striking, over his full career the average intensive offender committed about ten times as many crimes as the intermittent offender, yet was five times less likely to be arrested for any one crime. Once arrested, the intensive offender was also less likely to be convicted and incarcerated.

Examination of the associations between the two offender types and other offender attributes revealed the following significant results:

Juvenile criminality.

- A larger percentage of intensives than intermittents reported committing a serious crime before the age of 13.
- A larger percentage of intermittent offenders were incarcerated before the age of 18.

Criminal sophistication.

- Intensive offenders did more pre-crime planning than did intermittent offenders.
- As juveniles, a majority of the intensives committed crimes without partners; almost all intermittents used partners.
- Burglary was considerably more profitable to the intensives than to the intermittents.

Prosecutorial treatment.

- Prosecutors threatened a greater proportion of intensives than intermittents with the filing of prior felony convictions as special allegations, but there was no difference between the two types in the actual charging of priors.

Drugs and alcohol involvement.

- Those involved with alcohol alone were preponderantly the intermittent type.
- A greater proportion of intensives than intermittents were involved with drugs, alone or combined with alcohol.

Socioeconomic factors.

- The intermittent type was more likely to be better employed.

Use of violence.

- A moderately larger proportion of intensives than intermittents injured their victims.

- Intensives manifested much more violence in their personal lives than intermittents.

Motivation.

- Contrary to expectations, there were few differences between the two types in their motivation for crime.

Arrest, conviction, and incarceration rates.

- The average intensive offender experienced a few more arrests during his total career than did the average intermittent. However, during their adult career periods, intensive offenders were arrested for only 4 percent of their self-reported nondrug felonies, while intermittents were arrested for 21 percent. Intermittents were thus five times more likely to be arrested.
- Intermittent offenders had moderately higher conviction and incarceration rates per nondrug arrest than intensive offenders.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In order to decide whether crime could be significantly reduced by incarcerating a greater percentage of habitual offenders for longer terms, policymakers need estimates of the amount of crime such offenders actually commit and their probability of arrest and conviction. A unique contribution of this study is that it provides such estimates, by crime type and period in the criminal career, based on offenders' own reports. Besides incapacitation, the study results have implications for other criminal justice strategies: rehabilitation, deterrence, and prevention. The recommendations in the paragraphs below are too preliminary to be regarded as proposals for changes in current criminal justice policy. It is hoped, however, that they will contribute usefully to policy deliberations.

Rehabilitation

This sample was by selection a group of persons who had consistently adhered to a criminal lifestyle, despite repeated exposure to rehabilitation programs. The effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts was not a focus of the study, but judging from the offenders' own statements, the rehabilitation programs in which they participated did not provide a strong inducement for them to end their criminal careers. Most of the sample saw their crimes as freely chosen, preferred acts or as responses to special circumstances, usually arising from a personal relationship. Those who recognized their need for help were thinking mainly of job training. Even so, they did not necessarily believe that vocational training would overcome their tendency to continue in crime; fully half were either unsure about or had no intention of leaving crime.

Correctional authorities view job training as a means of rehabilitating those who commit crimes because they cannot earn an adequate income legitimately. In our sample, however, criminal motivation was rarely so singular; it usually included a mixture of instrumental and expressive elements. Still, given the unfailing recidivism of the offenders, those who had better employment performance tended to commit less serious crimes. We are thus led to believe that voluntary programs of job training are a constructive means of reducing the criminal toll of habitual offenders.

The low participation of these offenders in drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, coupled with the prominent role of these substances in the respondents' crimes, suggest that drug and alcohol treatment programs could significantly reduce crime if they genuinely helped offenders eliminate their dependence.

Deterrence

Because of the growing evidence that efforts to rehabilitate criminals have fallen far short of expectations, many authorities now advocate concentrating less on improving the offender and more on improving the criminal justice system. Programs designed to speed and streamline the prosecution of criminals are finding widespread support. The theory behind these efforts is that criminals rationally weigh the risks and potential gains of their crimes and will desist if the risks seem too high.

Our sample did not fit the definition of rational criminality. The majority said that they had been unconcerned about the possibility of apprehension, though some attributed their indifference to the clouding of their thinking by drugs and alcohol. More to the point, over half the sample asserted that nothing could have deterred their return to crime after release from prison. For those who said they could have been deterred, the certainty of apprehension would have influenced them more than such other factors as the possibility of a longer prison sentence or stricter parole supervision. This perhaps reflects their awareness of a fairly high probability of conviction and incarceration once arrested.

The data gave us no reason to believe that the length of a prison term affects deterrence; those who served longer sentences did not have longer periods of street time after release until the next incarceration.

Prevention

Target hardening—making crime targets more difficult to reach—was of dubious effectiveness in preventing crime among this sample. The offenders simply switched to a more accessible target. For example, some interviewees responded that if they were frustrated in committing a store burglary by an effective security system, they would immediately substitute a robbery on the street. We believe that future studies of the costs and benefits of target hardening should consider the likelihood of a shift to personal crimes if property targets are hardened.

Incapacitation

The continuing criminal activity of this sample in the face of frequent arrests, convictions, and incarcerations is an indication of the inability of previous rehabilitation, deterrence, and prevention efforts to curtail their criminal behavior. The primary alternative for counteracting such offenders is a greater reliance on incapacitation. Incapacitation policies are intended to assure the conviction and prolonged incarceration of serious habitual offenders, once arrested. The rationale is obvious: Offenders cannot commit crimes against the community while in prison, and they are not likely to be able to make up for lost time after release if the probability of reincarceration is high. But an incapacitation policy is both unfair and highly costly if an undue number of inappropriate offenders are given long prison terms. Thus, the effectiveness of this approach rests largely on the ability of the criminal justice system to distinguish among offenders and identify those most deserving of lengthy imprisonment. It is very difficult to make that distinction; we present some preliminary ideas below.

Although the length and seriousness of a defendant's prior record give an indication of his propensity for future serious crime, the predictive value of this information by itself is weak. That is partly because of poor correlation between offenders' actual behavior and their arrest records. A meager arrest record may disguise a dangerous criminal, even though a long arrest record usually signifies extensive criminal activity. Our data emphasize that arrest records are not sufficient for distinguishing among the more serious and the less serious habitual offenders. When we compared the rap sheets of the intensives as a whole with those of the intermittents as a whole, no significant differences emerged between the types—not only in arrests but also in convictions and incarcerations. Yet, by their interview responses, we know that the intensives, less than one-third of the sample, had committed a disproportionately large number of the offenses reported. It is thus crucial to identify the intensive offenders by some means in addition to their criminal records. And if an objective of sentencing is to prevent future crime by incapacitating high-risk offenders, it is counterproductive to concentrate on older habitual offenders. The greatest effect in crimes prevented would come from imprisoning the younger, more active offenders, since individual offense rates appear to decline substantially with age.

What might the additional means of identification be? One would be to make better use of the crime-clearance information police obtain in following up an arrest. With a suspect in custody, police investigators are often able to "clear," or solve, previous crimes by linking them to the suspect through confession, similarity of modus operandi, fingerprint matches, and the like. A majority of the intensives in our sample reported that their arrests led to the clearance of some of their other crimes in this way. In one extreme case, twenty robberies were cleared by the arrest of one offender.

In current practice, much of this information is ignored except to close police files. When the police transfer charges to the prosecutor's office for the filing of a formal complaint, they include only the counts on which there is enough evidence to establish legal guilt. And after finding such evidence on one or two counts, the police tend to discontinue investigating the other cleared crimes. That is because they expect any charges beyond the strongest one or two to be dropped in return for a guilty plea. Even if they are not dropped, multiple convictions often do not increase the sentence. A more systematic attempt to investigate and legally prove additional counts would undoubtedly help distinguish the intensives among habitual offenders.

Another source of information to help identify the most serious offenders is the suspect's record of juvenile arrests and institutional commitments. Juvenile records are considered sensitive information, and their use is highly restricted by law. However, given their potential value in identifying the more serious habitual offenders, it appears that they should be made more accessible to prosecutors and used in sentencing decisions.

The preliminary evidence from this study suggests that incapacitation, by imprisonment, may be the most direct alternative for reducing the societal toll at the hands of habitual offenders, provided the most serious of them can be identified before their criminality has declined. If crime is to be reduced through incapacitation policies, the following procedural changes should be considered:

- Police and presentence investigators should provide prosecutors and judges with more thorough information—including multiple crime-clearance and juvenile offense data—to help identify the intensive offenders for whom incapacitation may be justified.
- Extended prison sentences should be imposed on offenders whose prior record and current charges reflect serious and sustained criminal activity. These sentences should be imposed at the earliest time such offenders have been identified with reasonable confidence.

NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study is just a beginning in the endeavor to understand the careers of serious habitual offenders. The authors are pursuing the effort. The methodology for obtaining information on offense rates, motivation, and selection of crime type and target will be refined and improved. Methods of cross-checking data for validity will be incorporated. Different samples of offenders will be drawn to examine different crime types or periods of career development. The research will be costly and may pose problems of data privacy and informed consent. However, if we want to know more about the group of offenders who are primarily responsible for serious felonies, the effort must be continued.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Foremost, our sincere appreciation goes to the inmates who were interviewed in the course of the study. They responded willingly and candidly about themselves, their crimes, and their experiences with the criminal justice system.

We are indebted to the members of our Habitual Offender Advisory Panel, who suggested additional topics for research and commented helpfully at critical stages of the study. The Advisory Panel members are Dean Norval Morris (University of Chicago Law School); Professor Alfred Blumstein (Carnegie-Mellon University); Professor Lawrence Bennett (Southern Illinois University; formerly Director of Research, California Department of Corrections); Professor Arthur Rosett (UCLA School of Law); Professor Gilbert Geis (University of California, Irvine); and Professor Aaron Wildavsky (Russell Sage Foundation; formerly School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley). We are especially grateful to Professor Bennett, who provided us with the official records of the inmates in our sample.

The study would not have been possible without the cooperation of Superintendent Daniel McCarthy and Assistant Superintendent E. L. Snyder, of the California Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo. They granted permission for the interviews to be held in their institution and facilitated the collection and interpretation of inmate data from their files.

We are indebted to Gerald Caplan, former director of the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, for providing the opportunity to pursue basic research questions. Michael Mulkey, grant monitor, and Richard T. Barnes, Director of Special Programs, were helpful in running interference when we needed it.

Professor Daniel Glaser, University of Southern California, made cogent and helpful comments on an earlier draft of this report and reviewed the final draft. We are also grateful to John Conrad and Dr. Simon Dinitz (both from The Academy of Contemporary Problems, Columbus, Ohio) for their useful input and and support throughout the research project.

Our gratitude extends to many Rand colleagues who aided this study in varied and important ways. Harriet B. Stambul, Mark Peterson, Stephen Klein, and Marta Samulon helped interview the offenders. Robert K. Yin reviewed this report and provided useful comments and advice. The editorial comments of Christine D'Arc were of great value to the final report. Sue Polich and Jack Lema performed the vital computer programming for the analysis of the interviews and the criminal justice records. Deborah Hensler, Nancy Hope, and Donald Trees contributed to the design of the survey instrument. Saundra Brewer served as a versatile research assistant, and the secretarial assistance of Mary Sauters, Karen Ellis, and Bernice Jacobs was invaluable.

CONTENTS

PREFACE iii

SUMMARY v

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xvii

FIGURES xxiii

TABLES xxv

Section
- I. INTRODUCTION 1
  - Theoretical Foundations 2
    - Prior Approaches 3
    - Framework of This Study: Theory of Persistent Criminality 4
  - Scope of the Study 6
  - Organization of the Report 7
- II. SAMPLE SELECTION AND INTERVIEW PROCEDURES 9
  - The Sample 9
  - The Interviews 10
    - The Instrument 10
    - Checking the Validity of Self-Reported Criminality Data 11
    - Conduct of the Interviews 11
- III. PATTERNS OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY 13
  - Career Periods and Time at Risk 13
  - Length and Frequency of Incarceration 15
  - Self-Reported Crimes 15
  - Arrests 18
  - Crime Specialization 19
    - Variation in Crime Types within Career Periods 20
    - Crime Switching across Career Periods 21
    - Self-Perceived Crime Sequence Patterns 21
  - Crime Seriousness 21
    - Crime Seriousness Index 24
    - Offense Rates 26
  - A Dichotomy of Offender Types 28
- IV. CONTACTS WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM 33
  - Procedural Background 33
  - Probability of Arrest 34
  - Prosecution and Sentencing 38
    - Conviction and Incarceration Rates 38
    - Treatment by Prosecutors 39
    - Treatment by Defense Counsel 43

Correctional Treatment ... 44
  Institutional Adjustment ... 45
  Institutional Treatment Programs ... 45
  Priority in Treatment for the Habitual Offender ... 48
Release and Postrelease Treatment ... 49
  Parole Treatment ... 49
  Postrelease Needs, Plans, and Actions ... 52
  Reincarceration ... 55
Review ... 57

V. CRIMINAL SOPHISTICATION ... 59
Sophistication in Planning Crimes ... 59
  Crime-Planning Sophistication Score ... 59
  Profile of Planning Sophistication ... 60
  Preferences among Crime-Planning Measures ... 62
  Preferences among Crimes ... 63
Sophistication in Executing Crimes and Avoiding Arrest ... 65
  Use of Partners ... 65
  Sources of Help Other than Partners ... 66
  Circumstances of Arrest ... 66
  Explanations for Escaping Arrest ... 67
  Geographic Range of Criminal Activity ... 69
  Fear of Arrest ... 69
Monetary Gain ... 70
Review ... 71

VI. MOTIVATION AND SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS ... 73
Socioeconomic Factors ... 73
  Family Background and Education ... 73
  Early Delinquency ... 74
Motivation for Crime ... 75
Drugs and Alcohol Involvement ... 79
  Interview Response Data ... 80
  Classification of the Sample by Career-long Drugs and Alcohol Involvement ... 81
  Drugs and Alcohol Involvement Related to Other Aspects of Criminal Careers ... 82
Employment Performance ... 85
  General Picture ... 86
  Postrelease Reemployment ... 87
  Loss of Employment ... 88
  Employment Performance Related to Other Aspects of Criminal Careers ... 89
Review ... 90

VII. VIOLENT ASPECTS OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY ... 92
Violence toward Victims ... 92
Violence in Personal Life ... 94
Interaction between Personal and Professional Violence ... 94
Review ... 96

VIII. TWO TYPES OF HABITUAL OFFENDERS: INTENSIVES AND INTERMITTENTS 97
  Offender Profiles 97
    Ed: The Typical Intensive 97
    Archie: The Sophisticated Intensive 100
    Ken: The Intermittent 101
  The Intensive/Intermittent Offender Dichotomy Related to Other Aspects of Criminal Careers 106
    Juvenile Experiences 106
    Criminal Sophistication 106
    Prosecutorial Treatment 108
    Drugs and Alcohol Involvement 108
    Socioeconomic Factors 109
    Use of Violence 110
    Motivation for Crimes 111
    Arrest, Conviction, and Incarceration 112
  Implications 113

IX. CONCLUSIONS 114
  The Interviewees and Their Criminal Careers 115
    Early Criminal Activity 115
    Rate and Types of Crimes 115
    Criminal Sophistication 116
    Legitimate Employment 117
    Violence 117
    Role of Drugs and Alcohol 117
    Prison and Postrelease Experience 117
    Intensive and Intermittent Offender Types 118
  Policy Implications 118
    Rehabilitation 118
    Deterrence 119
    Prevention 119
    Incapacitation 120
  Need for Further Research 121

Appendix

A. THE INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT 123
B. PREVIOUS STUDIES OF CRIMINAL CAREERS 145
C. THE USE OF SELF-REPORTED CRIME DATA 156

FIGURES

1. Criminal Career Periods 11
2. Average Years between Career Landmarks 14
3. Crime Matrix 17
4. Distribution of Sample by Criminal Type According to CSI Score . 29
5. Career Time Line 34

TABLES

1. Length of Career Periods 14
2. Street Time 16
3. Self-Reported Offenses 18
4. Arrests on Record 19
5. Distribution of Arrests: Sample versus National Average 19
6. Distribution of Reported Number of Offense Types 20
7. Changes in Principal Offense Type from Juvenile to Young Adult Periods 22
8. Changes in Principal Offense Type from Young Adult to Adult Periods 23
9. Distribution of First Offense Type Committed 24
10. Values of CSI Weighting Factors 25
11. Distribution of Scores on the Crime Seriousness Index 26
12. Offense Classes 27
13. Average Offense Rate per Month of Street Time 27
14. Classification of Interviewees by Offender Type 30
15. Summary Comparison of Offender Groups by Measures of Criminal Activity 31
16. Average Annual Offense Rate 32
17. Incapacitation Effects 36
18. Probability of Arrest, Young Adult and Adult Periods Combined 36
19. Probability of Arrest, Young Adult and Adult Periods Separate 37
20. Rate of Arrest 37
21. Conviction and Incarceration Rates by Offense Type: Sample Versus California Average 39
22. Conviction and Incarceration Rates for Nondrug Offenses 39
23. Opinions of Sentence Severity 43
24. Type of Defense Counsel 44
25. Difficulty in Adjusting to Penal Institutions 46
26. Participation in Treatment Programs 46
27. Usefulness of Treatment Programs 47
28. Reason for Participating in Treatment Programs 48
29. Prior/Expected Release on Parole 50
30. Parole Supervision 51
31. Needs after Release from Prison 52
32. Expected Postrelease Conduct 53
33. Inception of Recidivism 54
34. Deterrents to Recidivism 55
35. Length of Interval between Incarcerations Related to Length of Preceding Term 56
36. Length of Interval between Incarcerations Related to Age at Release from Preceding Term 57

37. Length of Interval between Incarcerations Related to Number of Prior Incarcerations 57
38. Preferences among Measures for Planning Burglaries and Robberies 63
39. Partiality among Selected Offenses 64
40. Use of Partners in Planning and Committing Crimes 66
41. Helpers Other Than Crime Partners 67
42. Circumstances of Arrest Leading to Landmark Incarceration 68
43. Main Explanation for Escaping Arrest 68
44. Geographic Range of Criminal Activity 69
45. Fear of Arrest 70
46. Usual Monetary Gain per Offense—Sample Median 71
47. Main Reason for Committing Crimes and Contributing Factors 76
48. Use of Money Gained from Crimes 77
49. Extent of Peer Influence 77
50. Relative Importance of High-Times and Job/Family Lifestyle Elements 78
51. Offense Rate Related to Crime Motivation 79
52. Influence of Drugs or Alcohol during Criminal Acts 81
53. Influence of Drugs and Alcohol Involvement on Criminal Career 82
54. Drugs/Alcohol Involvement Related to Type of Offense 83
55. Drugs/Alcohol Involvement Related to Offense Rate 84
56. Drugs/Alcohol Involvement Related to Contacts with Criminal Justice System 85
57. Aspects of Employment Performance 86
58. Postrelease Employment Search 88
59. Employment Performance Related to Offense Rate 89
60. Employment Performance Related to Crimes against Persons 89
61. Employment Performance Related to Crime-Free Intervals 90
62. Employment Performance Related to Drugs/Alcohol Involvement. 90
63. Use of Violence in Crimes 93
64. Violence in Personal Life 95
65. Violence in Personal Life Related to Injury of Crime Victim 96
66. Juvenile Characteristics Related to Offender Type 106
67. Mean Career Crime-Planning Sophistication Score Related to Offender Type 107
68. Proportion Committing Crimes Alone, By Offender Type 107
69. Fear of Arrest Related to Offender Type 107
70. Monetary Gain from Burglaries Related to Offender Type 108
71. Prosecutor's Use of Priors Related to Offender Type 108
72. Drugs/Alcohol Involvement Related to Offender Type 109
73. Self- versus Peer-Directed Behavior Related to Offender Type 109
74. Injury of Crime Victim Related to Offender Type 110
75. Median Number of Personal Fights Related to Offender Type 110
76. Explanations for Criminal Activity Related to Offender Type 111
77. Arrest, Conviction, and Incarceration Rates Related to Offender Type 112
78. Incarceration Rate Related to Offender Type 112
79. Probability of Arrest in Young Adult and Adult Periods Related to Offender Type 113

I. INTRODUCTION

Treatment and rehabilitation of offenders were until recently a dominant goal of the criminal justice system. Transforming criminals into law-respecting, productive citizens was thought to be a primary way of reducing crime. Both policy and operational decisions, especially in sentencing and in correctional programs, were strongly shaped by consideration of their expected impact on this transformation.

In recent years, however, practitioners in the criminal justice system, as well as its critics, have been shifting from this view, at least for the handling of the serious habitual offender. The emphasis in sentencing and correctional programs has been moving from rehabilitation to punishment and incapacitation of offenders through imprisonment. The latter "hard-line" position seeks to enhance public safety by separating the chronic offender from the community and to enhance deterrence through the use of harsher punishment. Compulsory programs of rehabilitation have fallen into disfavor.

The growing disillusionment with the current administration of criminal justice stems from the following propositions about the interaction between habitual offenders and the criminal justice system:

- Recidivists, who constitute a minority of all offenders, have been responsible for a disproportionately large number of serious crimes.[1]
- Though repeatedly arrested, recidivists are often incarcerated briefly or not at all, so they return to their communities and resume their criminal activities.[2]
- When recidivists are incarcerated, rehabilitation programs do not seem to reduce their propensity to return to crime after being released. As a consequence, their disproportionate contribution to the national crime problem continues.

Proponents of the new hard-line approach assert that its deterring and incapacitating effects on habitual offenders will significantly reduce crime.[3] The Rand study of habitual offenders, of which this report is a part, seeks to illuminate the implications of this approach.

The core of the hard-line approach is assuring the lengthy imprisonment of chronic criminals. Operationally, this would be achieved by avoidance of, or greater stringency in, plea bargaining; by swifter prosecution of recidivists, perhaps through special prosecutorial units; and by revising sentencing policy toward determinate sentences and a reduction of judicial discretion.

---

[1] M. Wolfgang, R. Figlio, and T. Sellin illustrate this point in *Delinquency in a Birth Cohort*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1972, Chap. 14. They report that more than half of all crimes and two-thirds of the violent crimes were committed by only six percent of the cohort studied (i.e., 18 percent of the total delinquent population). Ninety percent of all bodily injury offenses were committed by repeat offenders.

[2] J. Elkin, A. Blumstein, and W. Glass, "Recidivism as a Feedback Process: An Analytical Model and Empirical Validation," *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Vol. 1, 1973, pp. 7-26, estimates that over 87 percent of those arrested have been arrested before. P. Greenwood et al., *Prosecution of Adult Felony Defendants: A Policy Perspective*, D. C. Heath, Lexington, Mass., 1976, found that among a group of Los Angeles County defendants who had served prior prison terms, only 50 percent of the robbers and 15 percent of the burglars later convicted were sentenced to prison.

[3] J. Q. Wilson, *Thinking about Crime*, Basic Books, New York, 1975; R. Shinnar and S. Shinnar, "The Effects of the Criminal Justice System on the Control of Crime: A Quantitative Approach," *Law and Society Review*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1975, pp. 581-611.

Notwithstanding the apparent readiness of government officials and the public to deal more harshly with habitual offenders, the application of a hard-line policy presents problems. As a practical matter, unlimited prison capacity cannot be provided. And since habitual offenders differ in their dangerousness, the system needs to distinguish among them and identify those most deserving of containment. Decisions must be reached on how long they must be contained to significantly reduce overall crime.

With present knowledge, it is difficult to accurately classify an offender in terms of the future threat he poses to the community. Although the length and seriousness of a defendant's record give an indication of his propensity toward crime, the predictive value of this information by itself has been found to be weak. Part of the difficulty comes from our inability to assess criminal records. In particular, relatively little is known about how habitual offenders differ in the rate of committing crimes and in their skill at avoiding arrest. These factors are critical, for if crime commission and arrest rates differ significantly among offenders, the effect of longer sentences on overall crime will depend greatly on who is incarcerated for how long. To establish an effective incapacitation policy, it is necessary to distinguish offenders by the rate of crime commission and by the number of arrests per number of crimes.

We also know little about whether an individual's pattern of offenses shifts over time or how long his criminal career is likely to last. Nor do we have much information about the social development and "street" lifestyles of offenders, which might provide insight into how rehabilitation could be made more effective. Finally, very few studies assess how sensibly the habitual offender is treated by criminal justice agencies. We cannot say whether the high volume of recidivist crime represents a failure of the system to contain habitual offenders, or whether these offenders represent the unavoidable failures in a system that rationally balances the competing goals of public protection and individual rights.

This study was undertaken to provide answers to the issues raised above. Our main data sources were the official records ("rap sheets") of a sample of habitual offenders and the responses they gave in comprehensive and detailed interviews.

Before we proceed, several matters of definition and scope need to be clarified. This study is concerned with the activities of habitual felons—adults who have demonstrated a persistent involvement in serious crime: robbery, burglary, assault, rape, and homicide. These are offenses about which the public is particularly concerned. The term "habitual" simply means that the offender has persisted in serious criminal activity despite repeated convictions and periods of confinement.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Although little research has directly addressed the behavior of offenders over the course of their criminal careers, the desirability of such a study has long been recognized. As early as 1893, Otto Kobner stated that "correct statistics of offenders can be developed only by a study of the total life histories of individuals."[4] Later, Georg von Mayr argued that "a deeper insight into the statistics of criminality is made possible by the disclosure of developmental regularities which must be sought through a study of the manner in which criminality develops in the course of a human lifetime."[5] More recently, Donald Gibbons declared that "criminological attention must turn away from the study of crime and criminals to the examination of various types of role careers in criminality."[6]

Roebuck suggests that the study of criminal career development is necessary in criminological research because

> there is no general theory of criminal behavior[;] . . . however, many offenders demonstrate a patterning of offense behavior in their criminal careers; offenders with similar offense patterns are likely to share certain social and psychological attributes which differentiate them from offenders with other offense behavior patterns.[7]

If subgroups of offenders who share common developmental processes can be identified, differentiated programs of treatment and control might be devised.

Prior Approaches

Although we believe this study to be the first designed to systematically trace the changes that occur during the course of a criminal career, other studies have touched on criminal career development. They are reviewed in detail in Appendix B and are summarized below.

One approach has been to adopt the offender's perspective, which has resulted in biographies, "autobiographies," and case studies. Examples are *The Professional Thief*, by E. H. Sutherland, and *The Natural History of a Delinquent Career*, by Clifford Shaw.[8] The life-history approach reveals inner strivings, motivations, barriers, and other personal and social factors that move the offender toward certain behavior patterns.

This approach resembles the methodology employed in our study. Regrettably, such case studies usually rely on the life histories of individuals or do not analyze the data in a quantitative manner. Therefore, it is impossible to infer the representativeness of the persons studied. Furthermore, these biographical accounts usually fail to relate the offender's developmental process to his contacts with criminal justice agencies. Such information is necessary for developing broad theories about the progress of criminal careers.

A second approach has been to analyze official criminal justice records. An example is *Delinquency in a Birth Cohort*, by Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin. They analyzed several kinds of records to ascertain the nature of criminal behavior during the course of a criminal career. The results have afforded some insight into the relation between age and criminality, the dependence of crime on sociodemographic variables, and the phenomenon of crime switching.

---

[4] O. Kobner, "Die Methode einer wissenschaftlichen Ruckfallsstatistik als Grundlage einer Reform der Kriminalstatistik," *Zeitschrift gesamter Strafrechtswissenschaft*, Vol. 13, 1893, p. 670.

[5] Georg von Mayr, "Statistik und Gesselschaftslehre," *Moralstatistik mit Einschluss der Kriminalstatistik*, Vol. 3, Mohr, Tubingen, Germany, 1917, p. 425.

[6] Donald C. Gibbons, *Society, Crime, and Criminal Careers*, 2d ed., Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973, p. 13.

[7] J. Roebuck, *Criminal Typology*, Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1965, p. 16.

[8] E. H. Sutherland, *The Professional Thief*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1937; Clifford R. Shaw, *The Natural History of a Delinquent Career*, Albert Saifer, Philadelphia, 1951.

A third approach has been the conceptual and theoretical analysis of deviant and criminal careers. Of particular significance are the works of Clinard and Quinney and of Gibbons.[9] They stress the crucial roles of society's reactions, peer group associations, and opportunity in the stabilization of criminal careers. This conceptual work is often grounded in empirical research.

Framework of This Study: Theory of Persistent Criminality

The results of such research provide broad impressions about how criminal careers are initiated, how they progress, and why they are discontinued. We have drawn upon these findings in constructing a preliminary theory of persistent criminality. Below are outlined a set of theoretical propositions from the literature that have guided our analytical approach. None of these propositions is definitive, and each could be developed more fully. Nevertheless, we believe that they generally express what the research community would expect our study to corroborate.

- No single theory explains the full range of crime motivation. However, a basic dichotomy is nearly universally recognized. Crimes are mainly committed either for what they yield (e.g., money, automobiles, or other property) or to express emotion (e.g., frustration, anger, or lust). This dichotomy has been labeled "instrumental" versus "expressive," terms adopted here. Property crimes are more often instrumental in being means of obtaining satisfaction from the products of crime rather than from the criminal acts themselves. Crimes against persons more often appear to be expressive, as direct attempts at emotional gratification, and therefore ends in themselves.
- Persistence in crime is highly correlated with the age at which the person began in crime, sex, race, socioeconomic status, residential setting, family situation, education, and employment.[10] The majority of offenders involved in street crime come from urban, lower-class backgrounds; experienced a disruptive early family life; and had other family members who were engaged in crime. They are also likely to have a low education level and a record of sporadic, low-skilled employment. Many began engaging in crime with a gang or peer group.[11]
- Instrumental motivation is conducive to progressively more rational criminality; the offender tends to learn from past positive and negative reinforcements. Thus, instrumental crime should be more susceptible to deterrence than expressive crime. Expressive crime tends to be impulsive

---

[9] M. Clinard and R. Quinney, *Criminal Behavior Systems: A Typology*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1967; Donald C. Gibbons, *Changing the Lawbreakers*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965, and idem, *Society, Crime, and Criminal Careers*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973.

[10] Gene Kasselbaum, David A. Ward, and Daniel M. Wilmer, *Prison Treatment and Parole Survival*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1971, Chap. 9.

[11] Daniel Glaser, "The Classification of Offenses and Offenders," *The Handbook of Criminology*, Rand McNally & Company, Skokie, Ill., 1974, pp. 45-83; W. Chambliss, "Types of Deviance and the Effectiveness of Legal Sanctions," *Wisconsin Law Review*, Vol. 703, 1967, pp. 712-717.

and reckless, particularly when it reflects reactions to frustration or humiliation, as opposed to stable cravings such as drug addiction.[12]

- As he becomes more skilled and socially involved in illegal pursuits, the instrumental offender becomes less interested in securing legitimate employment. Success, whether in legitimate or illegal undertakings, creates an increased degree of commitment, while failure fosters a shift to other pursuits, but often in an incompetent manner conducive to more failure and another reversal. Situational factors (e.g., loss of a job) seem to influence reversals when commitment is marginal.[13]
- The instrumental offender's increased commitment to and satisfaction from his participation in crime reflect the reinforcements he has received in both criminal and noncriminal styles of life. As he learns the techniques and, more important, the rationalizations, of continued deviance, he begins to confer a degree of worth on the goals he pursues. The instrumental offender accepts a criminal self-concept. The role conflict that once existed between conventional and deviant behavior is resolved when the offender accepts legitimate goals but identifies less with the conventional means by which to attain them. With his self-concept resolved, the offender is increasingly satisfied by and committed to a life of crime.[14] The expressive offender usually does not accept a criminal self-image.[15] Drifting between conventional and illegal lifestyles, he identifies with the conventional culture. He is increasingly dissatisfied with life in general, since he sees himself as a failure in criminal and conventional pursuits alike.
- Both instrumental and expressive motivations produce violence. However, the instrumental offender tends to avoid violence unless it is expedient. The expressive offender is likely to perpetuate violence for its own sake.[16]
- The instrumental offender is often involved with drugs, a ramification of his commitment to the criminal subculture. He often commits crime to obtain money to support his drug habit. The expressive offender's involvement with drugs or alcohol often incites him to commit crime.[17]
- The criminal justice system arrests and convicts offenders engaged in both instrumental and expressive crimes. The instrumental offender is likely to have been incarcerated several times in his early adult life; as he acquires

---

[12] Franklin E. Zimring, *Perspectives on Deterrence*, NIMH Monograph, Washington, D.C., 1971, p. 48; R. L. Burgess and R. L. Akers, "A Differential Association-Reinforcement Theory of Criminal Behavior," *Social Problems*, Vol. 14, 1971, pp. 128-147; Chambliss, "Types of Deviance."

[13] Daniel Glaser, *The Effectiveness of a Prison and Parole System*, abridged ed., The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., Indianapolis, 1969, Chap. 17.

[14] J. Irwin, *The Felon*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1970; Howard S. Becker, "Notes on the Concept of Commitment," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 66, July 1960, pp. 32-40; J. Inciardi, *Careers in Crime*, Rand McNally, Chicago, 1975, p. 299; T. Parker and R. Allerton, *The Courage of His Convictions*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1962.

[15] G. Geis, "Avocational Crime," in Glaser, *Handbook of Criminology*, p. 273; Clinard and Quinney, *Criminal Behavior Systems*, p. 7; Gibbons, *Society, Crime, and Criminal Careers*, p. 320.

[16] A. Normandeau, "Trends and Patterns in Crimes of Robbery," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1968; C. Spencer, "A Typology of Violent Offenders," California Department of Corrections, Research Report 23, 1966; Gibbons, *Society, Crime, and Criminal Careers*, p. 271.

[17] John Conklin, *Robbery and the Criminal Justice System*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1972, Chap. 4; see also Daniel Glaser, "Interlocking Dualities in Drug Use, Drug Control, and Crime," and Leroy Gould, "Crime and the Addict: Beyond Common Sense," *Drugs and the Criminal Justice System*, edited by J. Inciardi and C. Chambers, Sage Publications, Los Angeles, 1974.

expertise in committing crimes and in avoiding arrest, he is likely to be arrested less often.[18] Once the habitual offender is arrested, however, he is dealt with more severely than the less experienced offender by police, prosecutors, judges, correctional authorities, and parole officers.[19]

- For the majority of offenders, criminal activity gradually declines after a peak period estimated at 25 to 31 years of age.[20] Persons who professionally engage in property crimes tend to continue them into middle age, when many retire with noncriminal occupations.[21] The expressive offender becomes less involved in serious offenses and gravitates toward lesser offenses such as drunkenness, vagrancy, and simple assault.[22]

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The theoretical foundation summarized above suggests the issues on which this study focused in analyzing offenders' records and in devising, conducting, and interpreting the interviews.

The extent and patterns of criminality.

- What types of offense are committed with what frequency at what points in a criminal career?
- How does incarceration affect the pattern of criminal activities?
- To what extent do offenders vary their crimes rather than specialize?
- How does the seriousness of an offender's crimes vary over time? With what factors is it associated?

Offenders' interactions with the criminal justice system.

- How do arrest, conviction, and incarceration rates vary—both overall and by type of offense?
- Does incarceration affect these rates?
- What is the significance of the frequency and duration of periods of "street time" (intervals between incarcerations)?

Criminal sophistication.

- What are the extent and depth of crime planning?
- Do offenders show a preference for certain crimes?
- What measures do offenders take to improve the chances of succeeding in the crime and of avoiding arrest?
- How does monetary gain relate to patterns of criminality?

---

[18] Gibbons, *Society, Crime, and Criminal Careers*, p. 273.

[19] D. J. Newman, *Conviction: The Determination of Guilt or Innocence without Trial*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1969; Wayne R. La Fave, *Arrest: The Decision to Take a Suspect into Custody*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1967; F. W. Miller, *Prosecution: The Decision to Charge a Suspect with a Crime*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1968.

[20] Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck, *Delinquents and Nondelinquents in Perspective*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1968, pp. 142-143; idem, *Five Hundred Criminal Careers*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1930.

[21] Gibbons, *Society, Crime, and Criminal Careers*, p. 271.

[22] Glueck and Glueck, *Five Hundred Criminal Careers*, pp. 151-152.

Treatment by the criminal justice system.

- Is selective treatment given by the police in surveillance and apprehension? By prosecutors and judges in criminal proceedings? By judges in sentencing? By correctional authorities during incarceration?
- To what degree have these offenders participated in various rehabilitation programs? How do they assess program effects?

Role of drugs and alcohol.

- To what extent is the use of drugs and alcohol associated with criminal activity?
- How distinctive in their criminality are those involved with drugs and alcohol?

Socioeconomic factors.

- Do living arrangements, family relationships, and performance in legitimate employment affect the development of criminal careers?
- How do these factors change as careers progress?

Use of violence.

- What is the incidence of violence toward victims?
- How does the use of violence relate to the type of offense, motive, use of drugs and alcohol, and the like?
- Does violence in personal life dispose one toward the use of violence with victims?

Typing of offenders.

- Are there recognizable offender types?
- How can they be identified—qualitatively? quantitatively?
- What are their significant differences?

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report addresses the foregoing issues in the order they were presented. Section II describes how the sample of habitual felons was chosen from the inmates of a California prison, explains the selection criteria, and describes the interview process. (The interview instrument itself is reproduced in Appendix A.)

Section III begins the substantive analysis with a discussion of the patterns of criminal activity revealed in the interviews. The patterns have to do with the number and type of crimes, their rate, and crime specialization and switching in the three contiguous periods of the offenders' careers: (1) juvenile, (2) young adult, and (3) adult. Measures of crime seriousness are applied to the data to identify offender types among the interviewees. A new dichotomy of types emerges from the analysis.

Section IV focuses on the offenders' interactions with the criminal justice system. The sample's rap sheets and interview responses are analyzed to ascertain arrest, conviction, and incarceration rates and to assess treatment by prosecutors and correctional authorities.

Sections V, VI, and VII treat, respectively, the interviewees' criminal sophistication; motivations for crime, including drug and alcohol use and employment history; and use of violence.

Section VIII explores the implications of the new dichotomy of offender types identified in Sec. III. Section IX reviews and interprets the findings of the study.

II. SAMPLE SELECTION AND INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

THE SAMPLE

To serve the objectives of this study, we needed a set of self-reported criminal histories of serious habitual offenders. We decided to limit our sample population to persons who were currently serving prison terms for armed robbery and who had served at least one prior prison term. We believed that the fact of current incarceration for armed robbery was a valid indicator of dangerous criminal conduct, and that the record of at least one prior prison term was a valid indicator of persistent serious criminal activity. A single offense type, armed robbery, was used because of our concern that otherwise the extent of variability in career patterns, especially in our small sample, might defeat our analytical aims.

Robbery, the primary means of criminal violence by strangers, constitutes nearly half the crimes of violence in the United States.[23] FBI data indicate that robbery is armed in about two-thirds of the cases.[24] According to Conklin,

> There are many reasons why robbery is the best indicator of the type of crime most feared by the public. One is that robbery is almost always committed by a stranger in an unexpected and highly threatening manner. . . . Not only must the victim be put in fear or have force used against him for a robbery to occur, but the assault must also be linked to the theft. Force must be used in order to take property. . . . The crime of robbery thus incorporates two threatening elements: the use of force against the victim and theft of property.[25]

To obtain a population of felons meeting the foregoing criteria, we requested assistance from the California Department of Corrections (CDC), which secured the cooperation of the warden of California Men's Colony (CMC) at San Luis Obispo, California.[26] The research division provided a random list of nearly 60 felons from its computer file, each of whom was then confined at CMC for conviction on at least one count of armed robbery and had served at least one prior prison term. The prospective interviewees were identified by name and CDC number and were further characterized by the following information: county of conviction, date the current confinement began, year first admitted, year of birth, ethnicity, mental status, educational level, narcotics history, whether serving an aggravated sentence, number of prior sentences served, and whether incarcerated as a juvenile.

---

[23] U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Crime in the United States, 1973," *Uniform Crime Reports*, Washington, D.C., 1974, p. 2. In California in 1974, robberies constituted 41.5 percent of the reported felony crimes against persons and 6.6 percent of all reported felonies. California Department of Justice, Bureau of Criminal Statistics, *Crime and Delinquency in California, 1974.*

[24] FBI, "Crime . . . 1973," p. 17. According to more recent estimates, 47 percent of personal and 66 percent of commercial robberies are armed. See U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, *Criminal Victimization in the U.S.: A Comparison of 1973 and 1974 Findings*, Washington, D.C., May 1976, Table 17, p. 78.

[25] J. E. Conklin, *Robbery and the Criminal Justice System*, J. P. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1972, pp. 4-5, quoted in M. McCormick, *Robbery Prevention: What the Literature Reveals*, Western Behavioral Sciences Institute, La Jolla, Calif., 1974, p. 6.

[26] Dr. L. Bennett, formerly head of the Research Division, California Department of Corrections, and Superintendent D. McCarthy, warden of California Men's Colony, were the instrumental officials.

Each prospective interviewee was sent a notice ("ducat") asking that he appear at the interviewing station at a specified time. The purposes and nature of the interview were explained by a Rand interviewer, and his participation was requested.[27] As it turned out, one of the original candidates had already been transferred to another institution, four did not appear because of visitors' day commitments, and three declined for other reasons. The remainder were interviewed. One interviewee's responses were discarded because he appeared to be under the influence of narcotics during the interview. In all, 49 interviews were used in the analysis.

The mean age of the 49 interviewees was 39, slightly over the CMC average of 36. None were under 25 and only five were less than 30; six were over 50. Racial minorities, 42 percent of the CMC population, constituted only 25 percent of our sample. The mean number of school years completed by the interviewees was 8.0, slightly above the CMC average of 7.6 years.

THE INTERVIEWS

The Instrument

We administered the questionnaire (see Appendix A) in three sections corresponding to the three contiguous career periods: (1) the period from the first reported juvenile offense through the first juvenile incarceration, or until age 18 if no juvenile incarceration; (2) the period from release after the first juvenile incarceration through the first adult incarceration; and (3) the period from release after the first adult incarceration to the time of the interview in the current confinement. Figure 1 depicts these periods. The term "landmark" is used to denote an offense, arrest, conviction, or incarceration that delimits a period.

Each section contained approximately 200 questions, most being repeated from one section to the next. The following topics were addressed: family relationships; home and school background; sources of income; employment; motives for crimes; types and frequency of offenses; income realized; arrests and convictions; use of weapons; methods of planning and executing crimes; involvement with drugs and alcohol; use of violence; interactions with the criminal justice system; and post-release conduct.

The design of the interview instrument reflected our interest in reconstructing the criminal careers of offenders to ascertain whether the patterns of change conformed to various theories of criminal activity. For example, analysts have theorized that habitual criminals progress to crimes of greater gravity or greater violence; that they become more adept in manipulating the criminal justice system as they mature; and that they eventually mature out of unlawful conduct. Also, analysts have widely disagreed on the role of drugs and alcohol in criminal activity and on the relation of employment performance to persistent criminality. We hoped to produce data that would help resolve such controversies.[28]

---

[27] A stipend of $5.00 was offered. The customary prisoner's wage at CMC is 17 to 25 cents per hour.

[28] The interview instrument was developed in three stages. The initial form consisted entirely of open-ended questions to be administered by an interviewer in a relatively unstructured, tape-recorded session. The results of a trial application with ten subjects prompted a shift to a somewhat more structured interview instrument with more closed-ended questions, supplemented by tape-recorded discussion. A trial application with another ten subjects again impelled a redesign, this time to the final,

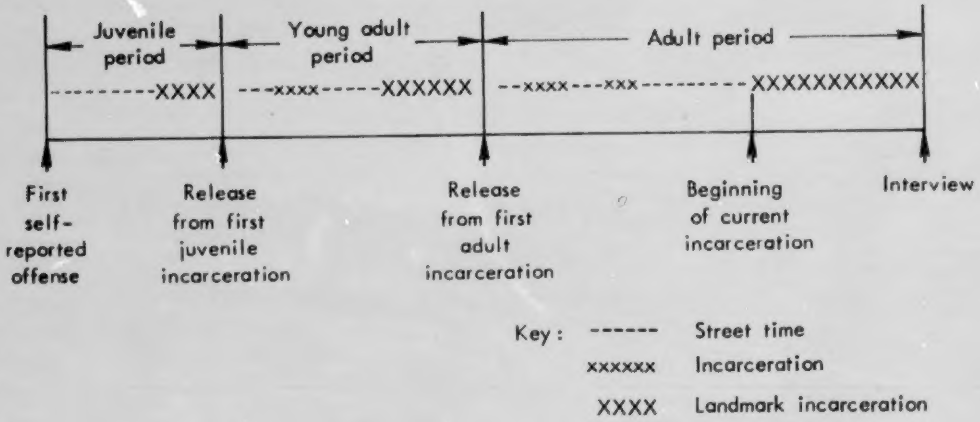

Juvenile period
Young adult period
Adult period
---------XXXX
---xxxx-----XXXXXX
--xxxx---xxx---------XXXXXXXXXXX
First self-reported offense
Release from first juvenile incarceration
Release from first adult incarceration
Beginning of current incarceration
Interview
Key:
------ Street time
xxxxxx Incarceration
XXXX Landmark incarceration

Fig. 1—Criminal career periods

Checking the Validity of Self-Reported Criminality Data

Before the interviews, we obtained the rap sheets of the prospective respondents and recorded the date that each period of incarceration exceeding 60 days began. The purpose was to identify the dates of the three career periods for each interviewee.

In the first ten minutes of an interview, we asked the respondent to verify each period of incarceration we had recorded from his rap sheet and to supply information not on the rap sheet: how long the incarcerations lasted, dates of incarceration as a juvenile, and out-of-state incarcerations. This review helped the offender understand our idea of career periods, and it helped to refresh the respondent's memory about the order of events in his past. It also diminished the "halo effect" in his responses since it made him aware that we had knowledge of some of the entries on his official record.

Questions in the interview instrument asked about respondents' offenses, arrests, and convictions.

After the interviews, we went back to the respondents' rap sheets and compared the recorded information on dates of arrest, the charges, and whether a conviction resulted with the corresponding information from the respondent, as a validity check. The offender was given no overt clue that his responses about arrests and convictions would be checked against his rap sheet.

Conduct of the Interviews

The interviews were conducted in private rooms, with only the inmate and the interviewer present; no correctional officer was within hearing distance. To encour-

---

highly structured interview instrument containing mostly closed-ended questions. In the questionnaire (see Appendix A), the reader will note that some of the specified responses appear in upper- and lowercase letters, and others in all-capital letters. The interviewer was instructed not to read the all-capital-letter responses, so those questions became open-ended. The trial application of the final version encouraged us to discontinue the recording of interviews on tape. Any quotations by offenders in this report are from pretest sessions.

age candor and avoid administrative complications, the interviews were not tape-recorded. Six Rand staff members, all experienced in interviewing offenders, conducted the interviews, which ran about two hours each.

To enhance the validity of the interviewees' responses, we followed certain procedures recommended in the literature:

- No one associated with the correctional institution was permitted to assist in conducting the interviews.
- The interviewer explained to the respondent that the interview would be complex in asking him to remember details of his life in three periods. The respondent was encouraged to ask for clarification if he did not understand a question and not to answer unless it was clear to him.
- The respondent was assured that he could decline to answer any question, and he was encouraged to do so if he could not answer honestly.
- The interviewer began by asking nonthreatening questions (e.g., about family, education, and employment) and reserved the questions about criminality for later in the interview.
- To help the respondent accurately recall the events of a certain career period, the interviewer described what the respondent was doing at the beginning and end of the period (e.g., "You had just graduated from Grant High School and were living with your sister on Alvarado St."). We obtained this "anchoring" information from official presentence reports.
- In asking questions requiring a categorical answer (always, sometimes, never), the interviewer gave the respondent a printed card showing the choices, to avoid "response patterning."
- In several of the open-ended questions, the respondent was allowed to digress, in order to build rapport with the interviewer and to reduce fatigue. Most of this information was not recorded.

The administration at CMC, which is classified as a medium-security facility, was known to have established good relations with the inmates. There was no reported disruption at the facility before the time of the interviews and no discernible tension during the time. Morale seemed high among inmates and correctional personnel alike. During the interviews the offenders were cordial and appeared to give thoughtful consideration to the questions. Very few showed any reluctance to talk about their past behavior. In fact, our most difficult job was keeping to the material in the questionnaire and not going off on interesting tangents.

III. PATTERNS OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

In focusing on serious habitual offenders, this study is concerned not with a few isolated criminal acts but with persistent patterns of criminality sustained over many years. The offender's own report of criminal activity, combined with official data, enabled us to go beyond the relatively few crimes for which he had been arrested to identify a pattern of criminal activity throughout his career.

The most interesting and policy-relevant characteristic of this criminal activity is its variation in intensity and seriousness over time. Habitual offenders are commonly thought to account for disproportionately large amounts of crime. The issue is how much crime and what types?

Criminologists have advanced a variety of hypotheses about how the criminal career develops. One is that over time the seriousness of offenses increases while their frequency declines. Another is that the offender eventually "burns out" or matures out of predatory criminal activity into a less hazardous or demanding means of obtaining financial support. The design of this study permitted us to look closely at career maturation in a group of highly active offenders.

Recent policy interest in greater incapacitation of habitual offenders reflects a belief that they present a higher than average risk to the public safety and that their prolonged incarceration can substantially reduce crime. The effectiveness of a policy of special treatment for habitual offenders hinges on the ability of the system to identify these offenders before they have reached the burnout stage of their career in which they no longer pose a unique risk to society.

Criminologists have long attempted to classify offenders. Schemes based on physical characteristics, mentality, personality, modus operandi, motivation, selection of targets, and other factors have been proposed (see Appendix B). A key aim of this study—affecting the choice of the sample, the design of the interviews, and the tenor of the analysis—was to identify types of habitual offenders so as to facilitate the design of remedial policies and programs.

This section describes what our analysis revealed on the foregoing issues. It first defines the career periods in which our sample of offenders was "at risk" to engage in crime. Next it looks at patterns of crime specialization and crime switching. Turning to the issue of crime seriousness, it applies various measures to discern patterns in the severity and rate of these offenders' crimes over time. Finally, a new dichotomy of offender types that emerged in the analysis is presented and discussed.

CAREER PERIODS AND TIME AT RISK

As explained earlier, the criminal careers of our interviewees were divided into periods separated by three landmark incarcerations: the first juvenile incarceration (or the age of 18, if no such incarceration); the first adult incarceration; and the current incarceration. These periods were the basis for organizing the interview instrument, and they facilitated the comparison of career development among the sample. Table 1 gives a summary description of the lengths of these career periods for the sample.

Table 1

LENGTH OF CAREER PERIODS
(Years)

Characteristic	Entire Career	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
Mean	21.0[a]	2.8	7.8	11.1
Median	18.1	1.3	6.4	10.3
Minimum	9.4	0[b]	0[b]	1.3
Maximum	42.8	14.0	24.1	33.4
Standard deviation	7.4	2.9	5.3	6.1

[a] This figure differs from the sum of the period lengths because of adjustments made to juvenile period lengths for several persons.

[b] Criminally inactive persons.

Note that *median* career length from first arrest to current incarceration is about 18 years. For individuals, however, career length is highly disparate, ranging from less than 10 years to more than 40 years. Both the median and the mean period lengths increase markedly in successive periods. Figure 2 shows the length of time between landmark incarcerations in terms of sample medians.[29]

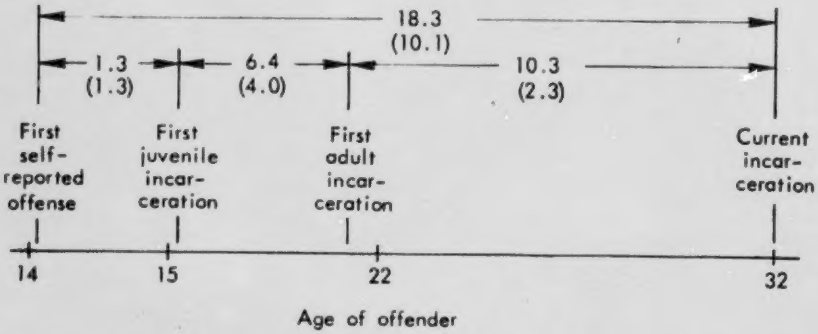

18.3
(10.1)
1.3
(1.3)
6.4
(4.0)
10.3
(2.3)
First self-reported offense
First juvenile incarceration
First adult incarceration
Current incarceration
14
15
22
32
Age of offender

Fig. 2—Average years between career landmarks (figures in parentheses are years of street time)

---

[29] The interviews focused on different intervals within career periods, depending upon the topic being addressed. Queries about the execution of a crime, crime "take," and the related events of arrest and conviction called for responses covering entire career periods. On the other hand, many questions were directed primarily to the six months of street time preceding a landmark incarceration. For a number of offenders, our definition of the juvenile period did not apply because they reported committing their first offense after their eighteenth birthday or even after their first incarceration. For them, the juvenile period was arbitrarily defined as the six months before the eighteenth birthday. Some questions concerned the period of a landmark incarceration. Still others addressed the three months after release from a landmark incarceration. And a few questions, mainly on family background, pertained to a time before the juvenile period.

LENGTH AND FREQUENCY OF INCARCERATION

As Fig. 2 shows, the offenders in this sample were subjected to longer terms of incarceration in each successive career period. Median time at risk dropped from 100 percent in the juvenile period to about 64 percent in the young adult period and only 24 percent in the adult period. Sixty-five percent served time in a state reformatory or prison before their eighteenth birthday. The sample had served an average of 2.2 prison terms before the current one. Fifteen offenders served three or more prior prison terms; five was the maximum. The average length of successive prison terms is shown below:

Prison Term	Average Length (years)
First	2.4
Second	3.3
Third	2.9
Fourth	3.7
Fifth	5.7

Thus, not only did the frequency of incarceration increase with age, as will be discussed in later sections, but so did the length of each incarceration. Time at risk diminished.

An accurate calculation of time at risk is essential for determining the intensity of criminal behavior. Table 2 summarizes the data on street time, by career period. The table shows that these offenders had been incarcerated, on the average, for about half of their criminal careers—approximately ten years. However, both absolute and relative street time varied substantially among individual offenders. Furthermore, for the sample as a whole street time was noticeably greater in the young adult than in the adult period, both absolutely and relatively.

Street-time data will be used later in calculating crime rates and in identifying types of offenders.

SELF-REPORTED CRIMES

Self-reported criminality data are becoming increasingly important, given the current emphasis on incapacitation.[30] To assess the effectiveness of lengthier terms of incarceration, we must estimate the number of crimes offenders have avoided under present incarceration policies and the magnitude of reduction in that number under different policies. Such estimates require data on the actual rates at which offenders commit crimes while free. Naturally, the incapacitative effect is greater with a higher individual crime rate.

An April 1977 preliminary report by the National Academy of Sciences Panel on Deterrent and Incapacitative Effects concluded:

> The primary emphasis in future research must be on deriving estimates of individual crime rates (λ). These estimates should be disaggregated by

---

[30] See Appendix C for a fuller discussion of the use of self-reported data in criminological research.

Table 2

STREET TIME

	Young Adult Period		Adult Period		Entire Career[a]	
Characteristic	Street Time (years)	Percent at Risk	Street Time (years)	Percent at Risk	Street Time (years)	Percent at Risk[b]
Minimum	0.4	9.0	0.1	1.6	3.6	20.6
Maximum	18.3	100.0	19.6	88.5	27.9	90.3
Mean	5.2	60.8	3.9	31.7	10.6	52.7
Median	4.0	64.2	2.3	24.0	10.1	54.2
Standard deviation	5.3	27.6	4.4	24.3	5.3	16.2

NOTE: For the juvenile period, percent at risk is 100 percent, by definition.

[a] Measured from time of first recorded arrest rather than first self-reported offense, because (1) the date of the first recorded arrest was considerably more reliable, and (2) the period between the first self-reported offense and the first recorded arrest, which is necessarily street time and is relatively long for some persons, would unduly affect the percent-at-risk measure.

[b] Percent at risk = street time/(street time + incarceration time).

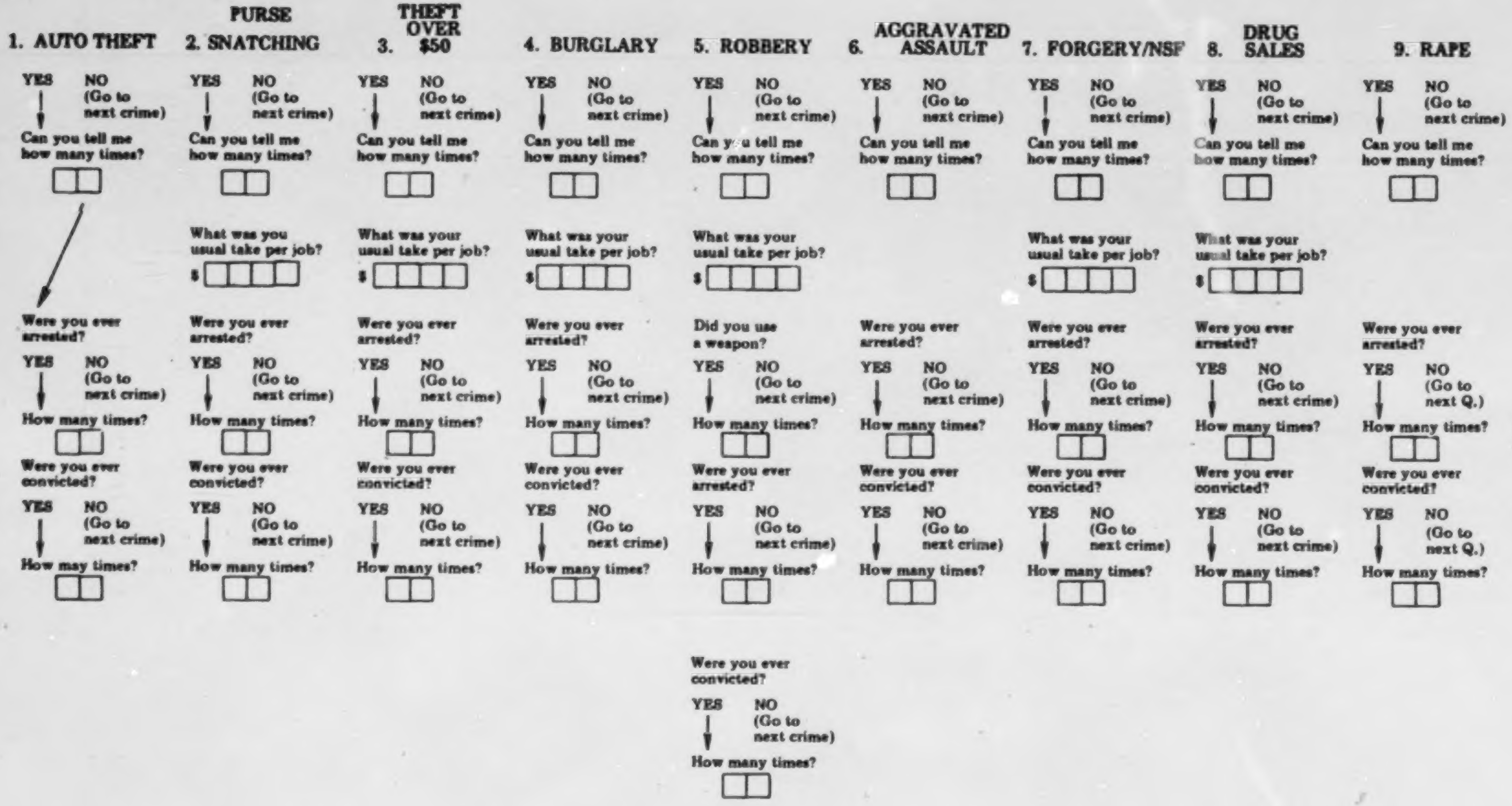
> crime type and point in the offender's criminal career; empirical research into the patterns of criminal activity during a career is especially critical. Careers should be examined for variations with age, and for significant relationships between individual crime rates and the propensity to be apprehended. This research program will depend upon securing rich data bases; a survey of self-reported criminality will be needed to provide data on undetected crimes.

The only practical means of estimating the actual level of crime an individual engages in is to solicit his own account. In our interviews, therefore, we asked the respondents to estimate, for each career period and for each of nine types of crime, how many times they committed the crime, how many times they were arrested, and how many times convicted. We arranged the questions and responses in a matrix, shown in Fig. 3.

Dates of arrests, convictions, and periods of incarceration exceeding 60 days were obtained from the offender's rap sheet and integrated with the self-reported data.

For the nine offense types about which they were asked, the 49 respondents reported committing a total of 10,505 offenses—an average of 214 per offender. The total number and relative frequency of each offense type are shown by career period in Table 3.

Excluding drug sales, which were the most common crimes but were committed by a small minority, the most common crime type for the group as a whole was burglary, especially during the first two periods. Both auto thefts and burglaries show the relative decline expected as offenders progress from juvenile property



1. AUTO THEFT	2. PURSE SNATCHING	3. THEFT OVER $50	4. BURGLARY	5. ROBBERY	6. AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	7. FORGERY/NSF	8. DRUG SALES	9. RAPE
YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)
Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐	Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐	Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐	Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐	Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐	Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐	Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐	Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐	Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐
↓	What was you usual take per job? $☐☐☐☐	What was your usual take per job? $☐☐☐☐	What was your usual take per job? $☐☐☐☐	What was your usual take per job? $☐☐☐☐		What was your usual take per job? $☐☐☐☐	What was your usual take per job? $☐☐☐☐	
Were you ever arrested?	Were you ever arrested?	Were you ever arrested?	Were you ever arrested?	Did you use a weapon?	Were you ever arrested?	Were you ever arrested?	Were you ever arrested?	Were you ever arrested?
YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next Q.)
How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐
Were you ever convicted?	Were you ever convicted?	Were you ever convicted?	Were you ever convicted?	Were you ever arrested?	Were you ever convicted?	Were you ever convicted?	Were you ever convicted?	Were you ever convicted?
YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)	YES ↓ NO (Go to next Q.)
How may times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐	How many times? ☐☐
				Were you ever convicted?				
				YES ↓ NO (Go to next crime)				
				How many times? ☐☐				

Fig. 3—Crime matrix (repeated for each career period)

Table 3

Self-Reported Offenses
(N = 49)

	Juvenile Period		Young Adult Period		Adult Period		Entire Career	
Offense Type	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Auto theft	898	(19.7)	558	(12.5)	36	(2.4)	1,492	(14.2)
Purse snatching	20	(0.4)	5	(–)	0	(–)	25	(0.2)
Theft over $50	433	(9.5)	417	(9.3)	143	(9.7)	993	(9.5)
Burglary	1,458	(32.0)	791	(17.7)	82	(5.6)	2,331	(22.2)
Robbery	11	(0.2)	405	(9.0)	439	(29.8)	855	(8.1)
Aggravated assault	103	(2.3)	56	(1.3)	29	(2.0)	188	(1.8)
Forgery/NSF[a]	363	(8.0)	489	(10.9)	143	(9.7)	995	(9.4)
Drug sales	1,262	(27.7)	1,754	(39.2)	604	(40.9)	3,620	(34.4)
Rape	3	(0.1)	2	(–)	1	(–)	6	(–)
Total	4,551	(100.0)	4,477	(100.0)	1,477	(100.0)	10,505	(100.0)

[a] NSF = nonsufficient funds.

crimes to adult predatory crimes. The considerable rate of forgery/NSF during the earlier periods is somewhat surprising.

ARRESTS

Table 4 classifies by offense type the arrest record of all but two of the 49 respondents in the young adult and adult periods.[31] Note that the eight offenses[32] about which the respondents were interviewed account for about two-thirds of their arrests.

Comparison of Tables 3 and 4 shows a gross discrepancy between the proportion of offenses reported and arrests recorded for drug sales, as we might expect since few drug sales become known to the police. Otherwise, only for forgery is there a marked change in the proportion of arrests between the two periods that does not parallel a change in the self-reported offense rate.

It is revealing to compare the incidence of reported offenses or recorded arrests for this sample against national data given in the FBI's *Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)*. Of the 7,671,230 arrests reported to the FBI in 1975, only about 2 million (26 percent) were for Part I offenses plus forgery and fraud—the offense types covered in our interviews. Yet these offense types accounted for more than 60 percent of the arrests of the respondents.

Another way of comparing the seriousness of this sample's crime with that of other offenders is to examine the relative distribution of their arrests for Part I crimes. Table 5 contrasts the data from our sample with *UCR* national arrest data

---

[31] Two rap sheets were unobtainable. The juvenile period is omitted because of the known underreporting of arrests (see Appendix C).

[32] Purse snatching is combined with theft in this tabulation.

Table 4

ARRESTS ON RECORD
(N = 47)

Offense	Young Adult Period		Adult Period	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Auto theft	24	(15.4)	3	(1.9)
Theft (including purse snatching	8	(5.1)	12	(7.6)
Burglary	58	(37.2)	18	(11.5)
Robbery	31	(19.9)	79	(50.3)
Aggravated assault	17	(10.9)	9	(5.7)
Forgery/NSF	14	(9.0)	35	(22.3)
Drug sales	1	(0.6)	0	(—)
Rape	3	(1.9)	1	(0.6)
Total	156	(100.0)	157	(100.0)

for 1975. It shows that our sample was much more inclined toward the serious crimes of robbery and burglary than the national average.

In summary, the sample's overall pattern of crime shows a clear progression in seriousness, as measured by relative frequency, from burglary and auto theft in the earlier periods to robbery in the later period. The overall level of crime is high. A comparison of the arrest frequency for this sample against national data indicates that the interviewees were much more inclined toward the more serious crimes of robbery and burglary. Not only did this group commit many more crimes than the average offender, but also much more serious ones, measured either by self-reports or by recorded arrests.

Table 5

DISTRIBUTION OF ARRESTS: SAMPLE VERSUS NATIONAL AVERAGE
(%)

Part I Offense	Sample	National Average
Rape	1	—
Aggravated assault	10	8
Robbery	42	4
Burglary	29	22
Larceny	8	60
Auto theft	10	6
Total	100	100

CRIME SPECIALIZATION

A matter of controversy among criminologists is whether offenders tend to commit crimes of the same type or different types. Some studies contend that criminal careers are homogeneous, while others argue that homogeneous careers are exceedingly uncommon (see Appendix B). Information on the phenomenon of crime specialization, by helping to type individual offenders, can facilitate the estimation of an offender's future risk to society and the determination of his sentence. Regrettably, the data bearing on this issue have come from studies of official arrests and convictions. Official records are thought to exaggerate the homogeneity of an offender's criminal activities since police are known to arrest some persons for new crimes simply because they had been arrested for them before.

The interviewees' reports of their crimes enabled us to examine the degree to which crime specialization occurs at any one point in a career, and the direction it takes over the full career.

Variation in Crime Types within Career Periods

Table 6 shows the number of crime types committed in each career period, as reported by the interviewees who were criminally active.

We see that approximately 40 percent of the criminally active interviewees reported that they had committed three or more crime types in the juvenile and young adult periods. Only 25 percent reported such diversity in the adult period. The average respondent committed four of the nine offense types over his full career; within each career period he committed fewer than three types. Less than one-third of the sample committed three or fewer of the offense types over their full careers; thus, this sample did not reflect a high degree of crime specialization.

The rap sheets of the interviewees reveal a similar diversity in offense types among arrests. The mean number of arrests recorded per interviewee was approximately twelve. Sixteen interviewees had three or more arrests for only one offense type (robbery for seven and burglary for four). Fifteen interviewees had three or more arrests for each of two offense types. And eleven had three or more arrests for each of three or more offense types. The remainder had fewer than three arrests for all offense types considered.

Table 6

DISTRIBUTION OF REPORTED NUMBER OF OFFENSE TYPES

	Number of Interviewees Committing			
	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period	Entire Career
Number of Types[a]	(N^b = 42)	(N^b = 48)	(N^b = 46)	(N^b = 49)
One	11	15	24	1
Two	14	12	11	9
Three	9	11	6	5
Four	4	5	4	16
Five	3	4	1	12
Six or more	1	1	0	6
Mean	2.5	2.5	1.85	4.0

[a] Out of a total of nine offense types addressed in the interviews.

[b] N denotes criminally active respondents.

Crime Switching across Career Periods

Tables 7 and 8 show whether interviewees with a specified principal offense type[33] switched or failed to switch from that type in the next career period. We see in Table 7, for example, that of the 18 interviewees who had burglary as their principal offense type in the juvenile period, 8 retained burglary as the principal offense in the young adult period, 1 switched to auto theft, 4 to robbery, 3 to forgery/NSF, and 2 to selling drugs. Thus there were 10 switches in principal offense type among these 18 interviewees. Table 7 also informs us that as young adults these 18 offenders had five different principal offense types and committed eight of the nine offense types considered in our study.

Tables 7 and 8 convey an unmistakable picture of substantial crime switching by this sample of habitual offenders. From the juvenile to the young adult period, 28 interviewees switched their principal offense type—approximately 67 percent of the 42 criminally active juveniles. From the young adult to the adult period, 34 made such a switch—about 71 percent of the 48 criminally active young adults. Despite the convergence toward robbery as a principal offense because of the design of the sample, the respondents remained diverse in principal offense type.

Broad inferences about crime switching from these data are not justified, given the narrow selection criteria used to obtain our sample. But there is impressive evidence here that crime specialization tends to be disrupted by the passage of time and particularly by prison incarceration. Few of the offenders in our sample pursued a sustained pattern of a single type of crime. The picture is one of opportunism, and the offenders appear to have engaged in whatever types of crime were available to them at the time and to have remained with them only as long as they were productive.

Self-Perceived Crime Sequence Patterns

The questionnaire asked the interviewees whether they noticed a pattern or regular sequence of crimes in a particular career period. If they did, they were asked to recall what crime type they committed first, then second, and so on.

It turned out that 37 of the 42 criminally active interviewees perceived a pattern to their offenses in the juvenile period; 42 of the 48 in the young adult period; and 41 of the 46 in the adult period. Table 9 displays the distribution of the first crime type committed in a career period by those who perceived a pattern in their activities. The part of the table below the double line summarizes the data and shows that the sample shifted to more serious crimes as their careers progressed.

CRIME SERIOUSNESS

The foregoing results indicate that the interviewees were highly diverse in the patterns and seriousness of their criminal behavior. In assessing this seriousness, we need to consider the number and relative frequency of the various crimes committed, the rate at which they were committed, and their gravity.

---

[33] "Principal offense type" refers to the type most frequently committed by an offender in a certain career period. In case of a tie, the most serious offense was chosen.

Table 7

CHANGES IN PRINCIPAL OFFENSE TYPE FROM JUVENILE TO YOUNG ADULT PERIODS

	Young Adult Period												
		Principal Offense Type (number of interviewees)											
Principal Offense Type in Juvenile Period	Number of Interviewees	Auto Theft	Purse Snatching	Theft over $50	Burglary	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Forgery/NSF	Drug Sales	Rape	No Crimes	Number of Switches in Principal Offense Type[a]	Number of Offense Types Committed
Inactive	7	1	—	—	1	1	—	3	1	—	—	—	5
Auto theft	8	1	—	—	3	4	—	—	—			7	8
Purse snatching	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	3	8
Theft over $50	4	—	—	—	3	—	—	1	—	—	—	4	4
Burglary	18	1	—	—	8	4	—	3	2	—	—	10	8
Robbery	2	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	3
Aggravated assault	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Forgery/NSF	3	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	1	5
Drug sales	3	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	2	6
Rape	0	—	—	—	—	[illegible]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	49	5	1	1	17	11	—	8	5	—	1	28	9

[a] Does not include switches from inactive to active or vice versa.

Table 8

CHANGES IN PRINCIPAL OFFENSE TYPE FROM YOUNG ADULT TO ADULT PERIODS

Principal Offense Type in Young Adult Period	Adult Period												
		Principal Offense Type (number of interviewees)											
	Number of Interviewees	Auto Theft	Purse Snatching	Theft over $50	Burglary	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Forgery/NSF	Drug Sales	Rape	No Crimes	Number of Switches in Principal Offense Type[a]	Number of Offense Types Committed
Inactive	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Auto theft	5	—	—	—	—	3	—	1	1	—	—	5	5
Purse snatching	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	5
Theft over $50	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Burglary	17	—	—	—	—	16	—	—	1	—	—	17	7
Robbery	11	—	—	—	—	7	—	—	1	—	3	1	7
Aggravated assault	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Forgery/NSF	8	—	—	1	—	5	—	2	—	—	—	6	4
Drug sales	5	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	2	—	1	3	6
Rape	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	49	—	—	1	—	36	—	3	5	—	4	34	8

[a] Does not include switches from inactive to active or vice versa.

Table 9

DISTRIBUTION OF FIRST OFFENSE TYPE COMMITTED

Offense	Juvenile Period		Young Adult Period		Adult Period	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Auto theft	18	(48.6)	6	(14.2)	3	(7.3)
Purse snatching	2	(5.4)	1	(2.3)	0	
Theft over $50	5	(13.5)	2	(4.7)	2	(4.8)
Burglary	11	(29.7)	17	(40.4)	5	(12.2)
Robbery	0		6	(14.2)	24	(58.5)
Aggravated assault	0		0		1	(2.4)
Forgery/NSF	0		6	(14.2)	5	(12.2)
Drug sales	1	(2.7)	4	(9.5)	1	(2.4)
Rape	0		0		0	
Total number perceiving an offense pattern	37	(100)	42	(100)	42	(100)
Crimes against persons	2	(5.4)	7	(16.7)	25	(61.0)
Crimes against property (and drug sales)	35	(94.6)	35	(83.3)	16	(39.0)

Crime Seriousness Index

To capture all of this information in a single measure that could be used to rank offenders in the seriousness of their criminal pattern, we developed a crime seriousness index as follows. For each of the nine types of offense that an interviewee reported committing, a weighted frequency reflecting the gravity of the offense was calculated. The magnitude of the basic weight was the average number of months served by California offenders sentenced to prison for that offense type.[34] Only the first act of that offense type received the full basic weight; subsequent acts were multiplied by a reduction factor depending on offense type. The purpose was to avoid distorting the index by frequently committed offenses. Thus, the weighted frequency for an offense type for a specified person and career period was determined by the simple formula

$$WF = w + (n - 1) \cdot p \cdot w$$

where w is the basic weight, n is the number of acts of the specified offense in the period, and p is the reduction factor for any acts of the offense after the first. Table 10 gives the values for w and p.

The use of this index as a measure of the relative seriousness of criminal conduct may appear to be unnecessarily arbitrary, but we found that the ordering of offenders it produced was not sensitive to the exact weights chosen. Consider, for example, the following alternative measures:

- The total number of offense acts (obtained by setting $w = 1$ and $p = 1$ in the formula given).

---

[34] California Department of Corrections, Bureau of Statistics, *1975 Annual Report.*

- The total number of acts of nondrug offenses (obtained by setting w = 0 and p = 0 for drug sales, w = 1 and p = 1 otherwise).
- Using the formula without a reduction factor for multiple acts of the same offense (obtained by retaining the specified values of w and setting p = 1).

After applying the four alternative crime seriousness measures to the 49 offenders, and identifying the most serious and the least serious quartiles, we find that:

- The twelve most serious offenders in the four rankings involve only 15 different individuals.
- The twelve least serious offenders in the four rankings involve only 13 different individuals.

This illustrates the insensitivity of the results to the details of the index. As another illustration, we anticipate the discussion below of the broad dichotomy into which our 49 offenders fall, the *intensive* type and the *intermittent* type, depending on their score on the crime seriousness index. Had we used the formula above without a reduction factor (i.e., p = 1), rather than as given, at most four persons would have been classified differently.

Application of the crime seriousness index confirms our earlier impressions of the diversity of criminality in the careers of this sample of habitual offenders—diversity within career periods and diversity from period to period. Consider the frequency distributions of the CSI values given in Table 11.

Within each career period Table 11 reveals large differences among the offenders in the amount of self-reported criminality. These CSI values, translated into acts of robbery, range from one robbery to several hundreds in a single period. The median and mean values, when similarly translated, range from 6 to approximately 36 robberies. Moreover, these distributions of CSI values are highly skewed by the intense criminality of a minority of interviewees in each period. No simple infer-

Table 10

VALUES OF CSI WEIGHTING FACTORS

Offense	w	p[a]
Auto theft	19	0.20
Purse snatching	27	0.30
Theft over $50	10	0.20
Burglary	27	0.30
Robbery	34	0.50
Aggravated assault	28	0.30
Forgery/NSF	19	0.20
Drug sales	33	0.10
Rape	45	1.00

[a] The magnitude of p was subjectively chosen. It is based on our judgment of the relative personal dangerousness of the crime and on the fact that many of the offenders sentenced to prison for a less serious offense have been found guilty of multiple counts.

Table 11

DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES ON THE CRIME SERIOUSNESS INDEX

CSI Score	Juvenile Period (N^a = 42)	Young Adult Period (N^a = 48)	Adult Period (N^a = 46)
100 or less	19	12	17
101-500	13	21	21
501-1000	5	6	5
More than 1000	5	9	3
Median	121.1	283.5	119.0
Mean	622.6	549.6	282.8

[a] N denotes criminally active respondents.

ence is suggested by a comparison of the median and mean CSI values over the career periods, except that the seriousness lessens in the adult period.

Although we do not show the details here, our examination of the variation in CSI values from period to period for individual offenders disclosed a similarly diverse picture. The median difference between the highest and lowest CSI score for individual offenders over the three career periods is approximately 400—equivalent to more than 20 robberies. Also, we observed no consistent shift of CSI values from period to period among the 49 interviewees.

Offense Rates

Aggregate Rates. Although measures such as the crime seriousness index are useful in ranking and categorizing offenders by their total criminal activity, they do not reveal the types and frequency of crimes committed. For this purpose we need to estimate offense rates for specified periods of time.

An offense rate expresses the average frequency of crimes committed per specified interval of time. In the literature, the average offense rate is referred to as lambda (λ).[35] (For example, for 25-year-old male robbers, λ might be estimated at 10 crimes per year.) The incapacitation effect (crimes prevented) of a sentencing policy can be estimated by multiplying the average sentence length (S) by λ. (Continuing the example, the incapacitation effect of a 3-year prison sentence for a 25-year-old robber would be 30 (10 × 3) crimes prevented.)

To deal with aggregate effects without ignoring the differences in seriousness among crime types, we grouped the nine offense types into four increasingly inclusive classes (see Table 12).

The "violent" offenses involve a direct confrontation with the victim and the threat or use of force against him. The "safety" offenses, which include burglary, are those containing the possibility of physical injury to the victim.

The 49 interviewees reported the number of times they had committed each of the nine offense types in each career period. Given these data, an offender's average

---

[35] R. Shinnar and S. Shinnar, "The Effects of the Criminal Justice System on the Control of Crime: A Quantitative Approach," *Law and Society Review*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1975, pp. 581-611.

Table 12

OFFENSE CLASSES

Offense Class	Rape	Aggr. Assault	Robbery	Purse Snatching	Burglary	Auto Theft	Theft over $50	Forgery/ NSF	Drug Sales
Violent	X	X	X	X					
Safety	X	X	X	X	X				
Nondrug	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
All	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

offense rate in a career period can be obtained by dividing the number of his criminal acts by the amount of time he was at risk. Table 13 displays the sample's average offense rates by period for each class of offense.

The most noticeable result is that the average offense rate declined over the career periods for all offense classes except the violent. The latter anomaly is undoubtedly a consequence of our sample-selection criterion that the interviewees be active robbers in the adult career period.

If the rates shown in Table 13 are representative of habitual offenders as a whole, and if these offenders can be identified only after they have built up a serious record, the potential effectiveness of a tougher imprisonment policy is called into question. The offender's criminal activity may well have peaked by the time he is identified. Obviously, if incapacitation sentences are to have a significant effect on overall crime, they must be imposed on offenders who represent the greatest risk.

Table 13

AVERAGE OFFENSE RATE PER MONTH OF STREET TIME

Offense Class	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period	Entire Career
Violent	0.10	0.16	0.20	0.15
Safety	1.15	0.43	0.24	0.49
Nondrug	2.37	0.92	0.38	0.99
All	3.28	1.52	0.64	1.51

NOTE: Figures obtained by dividing all offenses reported by the total number of months at risk for the entire sample.

Individual Rates. As for patterns of offense rates for individual interviewees, our analysis, using the fourth offense class embracing all nine crime types, revealed the following:

- Twelve of the 49 interviewees (25 percent) exceeded five crimes per month of street time in either the young adult or the adult career period.
- Thirteen interviewees (27 percent) had an offense rate that declined by over 50 percent in each of the two later periods.

- Five interviewees (10 percent) had an offense rate in the adult period that exceeded the rates of earlier periods by a factor of two or more.
- Seven interviewees (8 percent) had an offense rate in the young adult period that exceeded the rates of the other periods by a factor of two or more.

Thus, our sample showed highly diverse rates for offenses of all types. For some interviewees the seriousness of their crimes increased as their careers progressed; for others it decreased; for still others it peaked neither early nor late.

Because the sample as a whole engaged in increasingly serious crimes but at a decreasing rate as their careers progressed, our findings corroborate to an extent the conventional wisdom concerning habitual offenders. On the other hand, we observed an unexpectedly low degree of crime specialization among these offenders. Most impressive was the extreme diversity in criminal activity shown by this small sample of recidivists, when the selection criteria had biased the sample toward homogeneity. Finally, this section underscores the inadequacy of information derived from official records alone, if the activity patterns of habitual criminals are to be studied in depth.

A DICHOTOMY OF OFFENDER TYPES

A compelling reason for limiting our small sample of offenders to those who had progressed into robbery was to constrain the variability in career development that we would find among the interviewees. Thus, we excluded the patterns associated with, say, chronic sex offenders or confidence men. Despite this constraint, the interview data give a powerful impression of wide disparities in criminality, modus operandi, family relationships, legitimate employment, personal violence, and use of drugs and alcohol. The surprising degree of individual variability was somewhat of a barrier to any systematic typology. Yet, we saw at least one broad distinction emerge in the interviews.

One group of offenders we termed the *intensive* type. These "heavies" saw themselves as professional criminals, at least for part of their careers. Their criminal activity seemed to be sustained over long periods and was consciously directed to a specific purpose, be it high living, support of a drug habit, or repaying debts. Pre-crime planning was not necessarily a hallmark of this group (nearly all the sample was weak in planning), but the intensive type seemed to give deliberate attention to avoiding arrest.

The other, larger group we termed the *intermittent* type. Most did not view themselves as professional criminals. Their criminal activity seemed to have a more irregular and opportunistic character, and it often produced minimal gains. Their responses suggest that they were frequently oblivious to the risks and consequences of their criminal acts; this seeming indifference, compared with the posture of the intensive type, disposed them to a higher rate of arrest. In a sense, they were "losers."

In the analysis we decided to use various measures of criminal activity to bring these qualitative impressions into sharper focus. First, the *crime seriousness index (CSI)* scores, cumulated over the full career, were used to distinguish the two types. The 33 interviewees scoring less than 1200 were classified as intermittent offenders,

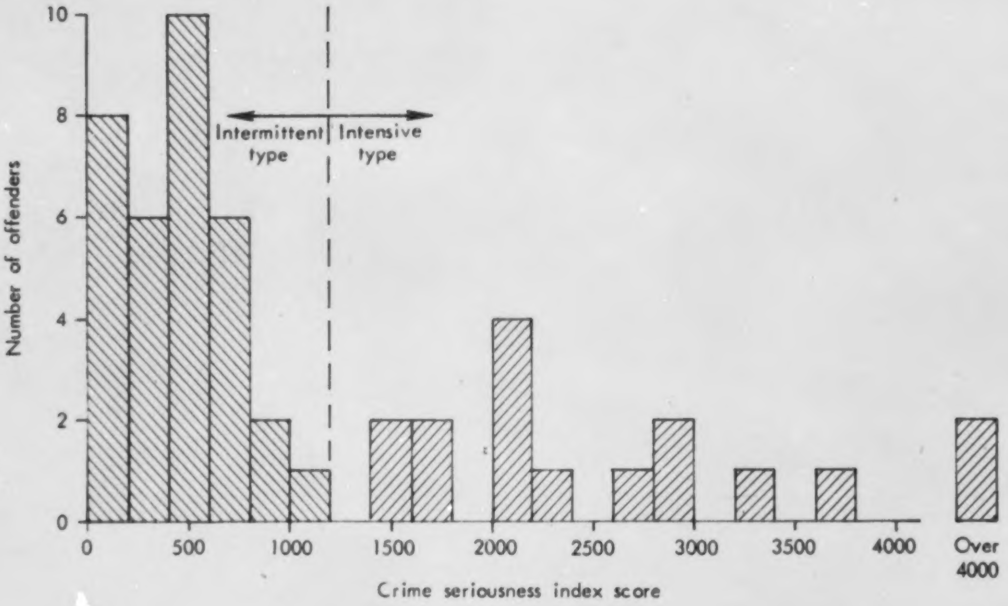


Fig. 4—Distribution of sample by criminal type according to CSI score

and the 16 scoring over 1200, intensive offenders. Figure 4 shows that the frequency distribution is highly skewed, with a very long tail.

The other measures applied to the resulting dichotomy were *percentage of street time* (percent at risk), an indication of the offender's success in avoiding serious punishment; and *the larger offense rate for nondrug offenses during the later two career periods* (λ max), a variant of the offense rates discussed above. Table 14 depicts the sample according to these measures, making a further distinction among respondents having a history of more or less incarceration (determined by less or more than 50 percent street time). The distribution of λ max is even more highly skewed than the CSI score distribution in Fig. 4, with 31 offenders having fewer than 1.5 and 11 offenders having greater than 5 crimes per month. The median is 0.99.

To elaborate on the quantitative distinctions among these four groups of interviewees, Table 15 shows how they compare in a number of relevant characteristics.

These data indicate a significant distinction between intensive and intermittent types in CSI, λ max, and number of personal crimes. But within each type the differences between the more and the less incarcerated groups are not significant for these three measures. (On the other hand, the differences between the two groups within each type for the other two measures—percentage of street time and incarceration time—are significant, as might be expected since they were the basis for distinguishing the groups.)

Notwithstanding the clear contrasts shown in Table 15 in the average characteristics of the two types and four groups of offenders, the diversity within them is considerable. So, not every individual of one type or one group is markedly distinguished from all individuals in the other type or groups.

Table 14

Classification of Inteviewees by Offender Type

Interviewee Identification Number	CSI Score	Higher Offense Rate[a] (nondrug crimes/ month) (λ max)	Percentage of Street Time[b]
Group A: Intensive Type with More Prison Incarceration (N = 6)			
46	3205	20.6	38.6
36	2893	6.6	43.7
20	2844	4.1	46.9
16	2013	1.5	40.1
3	1728	3.1	30.7
40	1422	21.0	28.5
Group B: Intensive Type with Less Prison Incarceration (N = 10)			
48	8950	8.0	90.3
45	7672	1.1	78.9
8	3724	0.50	50.4
25	2634	23.5	70.8
4	2317	16.7	54.8
22	2170	2.2	58.7
6	2114	6.5	70.9
37	2162	5.2	51.3
38	1726	12.1	67.4
47	1519	10.2	61.4
Group C: Intermittent Type with More Prison Incarceration (N = 14)			
5	756	2.2	40.1
23	590	1.3	25.0
30	555	1.4	20.6
13	553	2.1	32.7
29	507	0.48	39.3
31	447	0.31	45.8
41	425	1.2	46.0
14	377	0.33	41.0
17	311	0.11	42.0
18	266	0.15	41.0
43	142	0.17	34.6
7	124	0.10	49.6
21	116	0.10	24.7
33	102	0.14	36.8
Group D: Intermittent Type with Less Prison Incarceration (N = 19)			
35	1166	0.70	65.7
27	1000	0.25	56.9
42	940	0.89	57.1
24	721	2.6	66.5
44	704	8.5	74.6
26	675	0.98	50.5
9	649	0.96	54.2
28	612	0.40	71.0
34	565	0.63	53.8
12	500	0.59	56.3
15	499	1.0	65.4
1	434	0.48	76.5
32	361	0.33	64.2
10	236	0.27	56.3
11	215	0.03	57.2
19	200	0.09	87.1
39	148	0.15	68.0
49	105	0.25	58.9
2	34	0.13	69.6
Entire Sample (N = 49)			
Median	612	0.99	54.2
Mean	1309	3.5	52.7
Standard deviation	1750	5.8	16.2

[a] Offense rate in young adult or adult period, whichever is higher.

[b] Calculated from first recorded arrest.

Table 15

SUMMARY COMPARISON OF OFFENDER GROUPS BY MEASURES OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Measure	Intensive Type: Group A (N = 6)	Intensive Type: Group B (N = 10)	Intermittent Type: Group C (N = 14)	Intermittent Type: Group D (N = 19)
CSI score				
Mean	2351	3499	377	514
Median	2428	2243	401	500
Standard deviation	650	2500	200	300
Percentage of street time				
Mean	38.1	65.5	37.1	63.7
Median	39.3	64.4	39.7	64.2
Standard deviation	6.6	12.1	8.4	9.1
λ max (crimes/month of street time)				
Mean	9.5	8.6	0.72	1.0
Median	5.4	7.3	0.32	0.40
Standard deviation	8.1	7.0	0.70	1.8
Number of crimes against persons (entire career)				
Mean	43.5	52.8	7.8	10.8
Median	28.5	69.5	4.5	5.0
Standard deviation	33.1	35.8	7.5	14.5
Incarceration time (months)				
Mean	157	80	143	92
Median	144	73	133	93
Standard deviation	36	40	45	45

We shall not, at this point, discuss the policy implications of Table 15 except to mention one that is especially visible. Comparing Groups B and C in average crime seriousness index score and the amount of prison incarceration time served (or percentage of street time), we see that Group B had nearly ten times the criminality of Group C but served roughly half as much prison time.

Table 16 indicates more explicitly the difference in crime risks posed by the intermittent and intensive types. It shows the average offense rate (λ) for each offender type, by career period and offense class. Combined for all offenses and all career periods, the average offense rate per year for intensive offenders was 50.8, while that of the intermittent was 5.2. This suggests that the intensive group was ten times as criminally active as the intermittent group. The contrast is similarly marked in each career period and for all offense groups except in the juvenile period, where violent offenses were rarer than other offense types for either type of offender.

In later sections of this report we will examine other differences between the intensive and intermittent types. Here we need point out only that the intensive/intermittent dichotomy revealed in the offense rates could be an extremely important consideration in evaluating crime-control strategies. Although the entire sample frequently engaged in crime, the intensives persisted with much greater frequency and seriousness than the intermittents. Any policy that seeks to reduce crime by containing habitual offenders will be effective only to the extent that it reaches the intensive group.

Table 16

AVERAGE ANNUAL OFFENSE RATE

Offender Type	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period	Entire Career
		Violent Offenses		
Intensive	1.5	5.2	7.4	4.5
Intermittent	.9	.5	1.2	.8
		Safety Offenses		
Intensive	26.3	11.8	9.3	15.8
Intermittent	2.9	2.2	1.3	2.0
		Nondrug Offenses		
Intensive	51.4	26.1	10.9	30.7
Intermittent	8.5	4.5	3.0	4.6
		All Offenses		
Intensive	74.8	48.2	22.6	50.8
Intermittent	8.5	5.1	4.0	5.2

IV. CONTACTS WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The interactions habitual offenders have with the criminal justice system are of crucial importance in affecting the impact these offenders have on society's crime problem. Arrests, convictions, and incarcerations indeed influence the criminal activity of habitual offenders. The question is, in what ways and how much? As a first step toward answering the question, it is useful to examine the likelihood that habitual offenders will be arrested, convicted, and incarcerated.

This section explores the hypothesis that offenders may engage in more serious crime as their criminal careers progress, but they are less likely to be arrested for any single offense because of their increased experience in dealing with the system. Two related pieces of evidence support this hypothesis. First, it has been repeatedly shown that a high proportion of serious criminal careers begin with juvenile stealing or other delinquent activity. Juveniles tend to progress from less serious to more serious crimes.[36] Second, it is widely believed that the older and more seasoned the offender, the more adept he is in avoiding arrest and, when arrested, in avoiding conviction. As former LEAA administrator Richard Velde has said, "habitual criminals are often not caught because they are too clever and too experienced. And, if arrested, they often 'beat the rap' by using continuances and other ploys in court."[37]

The specific questions involved in investigating this hypothesis include: What fraction of offenses result in arrest? In conviction and incarceration? Does the probability of arrest, conviction, and incarceration decrease as the offender matures? If these probabilities change over time, can the change be attributed to the selective policies and performance of the criminal justice system, or to changes in offender behavior? Using data from the interview responses and the official records of our sample, we attempted to answer these questions.

PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

The rap sheets, made available to us through the California Department of Corrections, gave background data on each interviewee and listed his law enforcement and correctional history in California and on federal records. Rap sheet information enabled us to assess the criminal justice system's response to the offender's criminal activity, that is, his arrests, convictions, and incarcerations; to ascertain the completeness and accuracy of the information he reported on these events; and to estimate the probabilities of these events for specified offenses and career periods.

A computer-produced graph, the *career time line*, was designed to display concisely the rap sheet information, enriched by information from the respondent (see Fig. 5 for an example).

---

[36] M. Wolfgang, R. Figlio, and T. Sellin, *Delinquency in a Birth Cohort*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1972, pp. 174-207.

[37] "A War on Career Criminals Starts to Show Results," *U.S. News and World Report*, November 22, 1976, pp. 73-75.

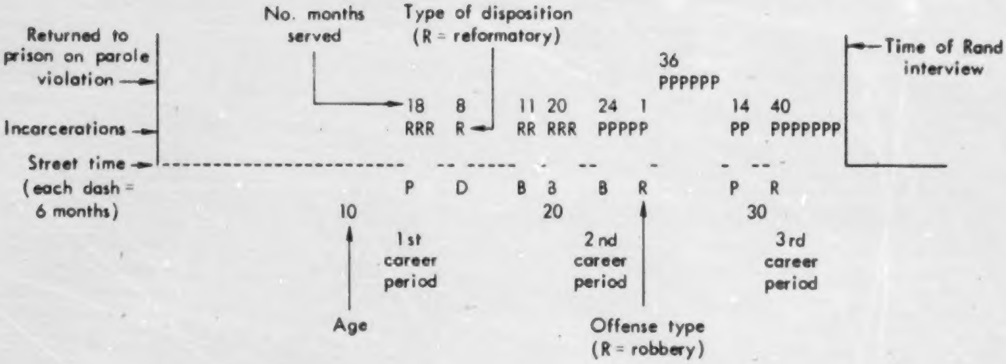

No. months served
Type of disposition (R = reformatory)
Returned to prison on parole violation
Incarcerations
Street time (each dash = 6 months)
Time of Rand interview
36
PPPPPP
18 8 11 20 24 1 14 40
RRR R RR RRR PPPPP PP PPPPPPP
P D B B B R P R
10 20 30
1st career period
2nd career period
3rd career period
Age
Offense type (R = robbery)

Fig. 5—Career time line

PROBABILITY OF ARREST

For criminologists, the probability of arrest is an important measure of the risk an offender takes when he engages in crime. It is also a critical element in estimating actual offense rates when we only know the offender's official arrest record. For the criminal justice system, the probability of arrest is an important factor in assessing alternative crime control strategies against a particular type of offender. It indicates the frequency with which the system can be expected to intervene in offenders' lives.

Prior to this study, one could only speculate on how the likelihood of arrest for any one crime type varied across offenders. Previous studies of criminal careers, which are based primarily on official records, imply that the seriousness or intensity of an offender's criminal activity is directly related to the number of times he has been arrested; and that the likelihood of arrest is independent of whatever other offender characteristics are being studied.[38] For instance, in Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin's Philadelphia birth cohort study, frequency of arrest is used as the principal measure for drawing inferences about the criminality of various groups (blacks vs. whites, recidivists, age groups, etc.). If these groups differ in actual probability of arrest, inferences about their criminality, being drawn from arrest data, will be systematically biased.

Conceptually there are two ways in which an offender's prior record might affect his likelihood of arrest, in opposite directions. First, the more contact the police have with an offender, the more likely they are to consider him a suspect or to have compiled information on his characteristics or MO (modus operandi). Thus, as an offender's record grows, it is expected that his behavior would become increasingly familiar to the police; that he would be treated with greater suspicion; and therefore that he would be arrested more often in proportion to the crimes he commits. On the other hand, if the offender learns from his crimes and his contacts with the system, he may become more skilled in avoiding apprehension as his career develops.

---

[38] There are two major sources of data on criminal career patterns. For adolescents, the key source is Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin, *Delinquency in a Birth Cohort*. The main data source on the criminal careers of adults is the FBI's "Careers in Crime" file. Both sources rely entirely on official criminal histories.

In Sec. V we will examine the development of skills in criminality in some detail. At this point we concentrate on frequency of arrest in proportion to the number of crimes committed.

The chance of an offender's being arrested for crime (q) may be estimated simply by dividing all of his arrests (a) by all of his crimes (c). Thus, $q = a/c$. Of course, for an offender who commits very few crimes (say fewer than 10), this estimate could be considerably in error.

We can further refine arrest probability by limiting it to specific types of crime. Since the clearance rate (proportion of crimes solved) varies considerably by crime type, there is every reason to believe that different types of crime (burglary, robbery, assault) pose different risks of apprehension to the offender.

The magnitude of q is particularly important in determining the incapacitation effects of sentencing, that is, the number of crimes prevented by the incarceration of offenders. The most widely accepted model for estimating incapacitation effects expresses the relationship between crime reduction and sentence severity as follows:[39]

$$A/P = \frac{1}{1 + \lambda(qJS)}$$

where P = potential number of crimes an average criminal will commit over his criminal career if the criminal justice system incapacitates no one,

A = actual number of crimes an average criminal will commit over his criminal career under a system with incapacitation,

q = probability of arrest per crime committed,

J = given arrest, probability of conviction and imprisonment,

S = average length of a prison term,

λ = annual number of crimes committed by the average criminal.

James Q. Wilson and Barbara Boland have calculated the effects of various sentencing options, based on assumptions about the true values of λ (offense rate) and q.[40] To demonstrate the relationship between incapacitation effects (in percentage of crimes reduced) and probability of arrest, we present some of their estimates in Table 17.

For example, if the probability of arrest is .05, an average sentence length of one year will reduce crime by 50 percent. Although increases in q do not lead to a proportional decrease in crime, the effects are still substantial.

Table 18 presents arrest probabilities by offense type for the sample, based on the number of crimes the respondents reported committing and the rap sheet arrest record, in the young adult and adult career periods. For the types of crime on which this study focused, the fraction of offenses resulting in arrest is quite low—most often between 5 and 15 percent. These estimates are reasonably consistent with our expectations.

---

[39] R. Shinnar and S. Shinnar, "The Effects of the Criminal Justice System on the Control of Crime: A Quantitative Approach," *Law and Society Review*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1975, pp. 581-611.

[40] James Q. Wilson and Barbara Boland, "Crime," in *The Urban Predicament*, ed. by William Gorham and Nathan Glaser, The Urban Institute, Washington, D.C., 1976.

Table 17

INCAPACITATION EFFECTS

q	Average Sentence Length (years) .5	1.0	2.0	5.0
.025	20	33	50	71
.05	33	50	67	83
.10	50	67	80	91

NOTE: Assumed values: λ = 10 and J = 0.5.

Table 18

PROBABILITY OF ARREST, YOUNG ADULT AND ADULT PERIODS COMBINED
(N = 47)

Offense Type	Self-Reported Number of Crimes Committed	Number of Arrests on Record	Probability of Arrest[a]
Auto theft	594	27	.04
Theft over $50/ purse snatching	560	20	.04
Burglary	873	76	.09
Robbery	844	110	.13
Aggravated assault	85	26	.31
Forgery/NSF	632	49	.08
Drug sales	2358	0	0
Rape	3	4	1.00

NOTE: N = 47 because two interviewees' rap sheets were unobtainable.

[a] That is, the proportion of self-reported crimes that resulted in a recorded arrest (except for the anomalous rape data).

It is noteworthy that if probabilities of arrest are calculated for each period separately instead of for combined periods, as in Table 18, they differ markedly (see Table 19).

As a whole, the sample appeared to be considerably more prone to arrest per offense committed in the adult period than in the young adult period. This finding contradicts the assumption that offenders become more skilled in avoiding arrest as their experience increases. Either they become more careless or only the "losers" continue to be active after repeated arrests.

Another way of looking at probability of arrest is to examine the frequency of arrests over time, disregarding self-reported offenses. Table 20 shows the rate of arrests for all offense types on the rap sheets and for the eight nondrug offense types examined in this study.

The reversal of the difference between the two career periods, depending on the time basis considered, seems noteworthy, since previous studies of official criminal

Table 19

PROBABILITY OF ARREST, YOUNG ADULT AND ADULT PERIODS SEPARATE

Offense	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
All (eight) nondrug offenses	.06	.20
Burglary only	.08	.29
Robbery only	.11	.21

Table 20

RATE OF ARREST

	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
Nondrug offenses		
Entire career	.44	.30
Street time only	.66	.86
All rap sheet offenses		
Entire career	.73	.48
Street time only	1.09	1.37

NOTE: Figures show the average number of arrests per interviewee (N = 47) per calendar year (entire career) and per year of street time.

records have suggested that frequency of arrest declines sharply after the age of 30 and continues to decrease with age.[41] With time in prison removed, this sample of offenders exhibits an increasing *rate of arrest* per year of street time, even while their self-reported *rate of offenses* declines with age.

Indirectly related to probability of arrest is whether the offender perceives that he is the selective target of law-enforcement efforts. Only about one-quarter (29 percent) felt that they were being selectively monitored by the police because of their record, after release from a juvenile institution. Only 12 percent felt this way after release from an adult institution.

Data from the sample on two other aspects of the arrest process—the circumstances of arrest and the length of time between the criminal act and arrest—will be treated in greater detail in Sec. V. Suffice it to say here that the data did not reveal a consistent shift from arrest at or fleeing the scene of the crime to arrest as a result of police investigation. The data did reveal a slight tendency for the interval between offense and arrest to lengthen in the later career periods, which suggests greater police persistence. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of these offenders were arrested one week or less after they committed the landmark offense in all career periods. And a strong minority were arrested at or fleeing the scene of all landmark offenses (in which case the prior record of the offender was irrelevant). On balance, the evidence from the responses of our sample was not strongly indicative of selective arrest treatment.

---

[41] Alfred Blumstein, using data from a random sample of arrests in 1973 in Washington, D.C., found that when arrestee age was held constant, arrest frequency increased as the number of prior arrests increased, especially for the first few arrests. Our sample was not large enough to enable us to control for age in estimating rate of arrest.

PROSECUTION AND SENTENCING

Conviction and Incarceration Rates

In this study conviction rate refers to the proportion of arrests that result in a judgment of conviction in a specified period and jurisdiction. Similarly, the incarceration rate is the proportion of arrests that result in a sentence imposing incarceration on the defendant, in either jail or prison.[42] Both rates may be expressed as probabilities applying to individual offenders or groups of offenders. These rates may be calculated in various ways. Here we obtain average rates for individual offense types or groups of offense types by dividing the number of convictions or incarcerations by the number of corresponding arrests.

Conviction and incarceration rates depend partly on the policies and performance of the criminal justice system. Specifically, they depend on the strength of the evidence gathered by the police; prosecutorial policies for screening and settling cases; the skills of prosecutors and defense counsels in criminal proceedings; and sentencing policy and practice. These rates also depend on the characteristics of the defendants, for example, on their criminal records.

Our interviewees were, by selection, repeat offenders with prior prison records. To the extent that they were recognized as serious offenders and were the focus of special attention by prosecutors and judges, we would expect them to have higher conviction and incarceration rates. Table 21 compares the conviction and incarceration rates of the sample and of all California offenders.

The difference between the sample and the statewide rates may suggest that police release, diversion, and other nonjudicial dispositions after arrest occurred less often for our sample than for the broader population. But it may also simply reflect the incomplete recording of arrests not leading to conviction on the offenders' rap sheets.[43]

For the eight nondrug offense types, which constituted 353 (61 percent) of the 577 arrests recorded on the rap sheets, the conviction rate was 69 percent and the incarceration rate was 58 percent.

Table 22 shows how conviction and incarceration rates for the eight nondrug offenses varied across the three career periods.

The increase in these rates over time may be explained in part by the shift in later periods to a greater proportion of robbery offenses, which have relatively high rates of conviction and incarceration. (Robbery accounted for only 1 percent of the arrests in the first period, 12 percent in the second, and 32 percent in the third.)

---

[42] In other research, incarceration rate is sometimes defined as the proportion of *convictions* that result in an incarceration sentence.

[43] A substantial number of those arrested are released by the police without the filing of any formal charges against them. Many of these arrests, which are counted in aggregate police statistics, are probably not entered on official rap sheets.

Table 21

CONVICTION AND INCARCERATION RATES BY OFFENSE TYPE:
SAMPLE VERSUS CALIFORNIA AVERAGE

Offense Type	Number of Arrests (Sample)	Conviction Rate		Incarceration Rate	
		Sample	California[a]	Sample	California[b]
Auto theft	40	.62	.10 (.70)	.48	.05 (.65)
Theft/purse snatching	24	.62	—	.33	—
Burglary	97	.55	.20 (.75)	.44	.10 (.70)
Robbery	111	.88	.20 (.65)	.86	.20 (.85)
Aggravated assault	27	.48	.15 (.65)	.30	.05 (.55)
Forgery/NSF	50	.74	—	.60	—
Drug sales	2	1.00	—	1.00	—
Rape	4	.50	.25 (.60)	.25	.15 (.70)

SOURCE (for California data): "Controlling Crime in California," *Report of the Governor's Select Committee on Law Enforcement Problems*, submitted to the California Legislature by Governor Ronald Reagan, August 1973.

NOTE: Dashes signify that the data are unavailable.

[a] Entries in parentheses are rates based on the number of court dispositions rather than number of arrests. (Averaged over all Index felonies, less than one-third of the reported arrests were disposed of by the courts.)

[b] Entries in parentheses are rates based on the number of superior-court convictions rather than the number of arrests. (Averaged over all Index felonies, only 15 percent of the arrests resulted in superior-court convictions.)

Table 22

CONVICTION AND INCARCERATION RATES
FOR NONDRUG OFFENSES

Career Period	Conviction Rate	Incarceration Rate
Juvenile	.54	.39
Young adult	.63	.50
Adult	.78	.71

Even so, the increase is notable; for example, robbery conviction and incarceration rates increased from 74 and 68 percent, respectively, in the young adult period to 95 and 94 percent in the adult period.

Treatment by Prosecutors

The decision to charge a suspect is discretionary with the prosecutor, a point that the courts have long upheld. His discretion extends to the number and type of charges filed (provided there is supporting evidence) and to the plea-bargaining process. Many factors—especially prior criminal record—can affect the prosecutor's treatment of the offender. Newman observes, for example, that the more serious the criminal record of the suspect, the more stringent prosecutors are in negotiating pleas of guilty.[44] In a recent study conducted by the Vera Institute of Justice, it was found that the probability of indicting depended primarily on the defendant's record and the severity of the current offense. Defendants with no prior record were more likely to have their charges dropped or reduced. Furthermore:

> When conviction and prison rates were compared for each arrest crime class for defendants with dissimilar criminal histories, defendants with prior prison records consistently fared worse than those without a record. For all classes of crimes, they were approximately twice as likely to be convicted and twice as likely to be sentenced to time.[45]

Undoubtedly, selective prosecutorial treatment contributes to such results.

Special Allegations and Offenses. Given the appropriate supporting evidence, the prosecutor has the discretion to allege and try to prove special circumstances—for example, prior felony record, possession or use of dangerous weapons, and great bodily injury to victims—warranting greater punishment of the defendant.[46] By definition, the habitual offender is vulnerable to the special allegation of prior felony convictions ("priors"); his treatment by the prosecutor can be expected to reflect the latter's power to file these charges.

The prosecutor may also charge a habitual offender with separate offenses related to his past record, for example, ownership or possession of a concealed weapon by a felon.[47]

In the interviews, we asked the offenders:

> *In the proceeding leading to your current incarceration, did the prosecutor ever threaten you with prior offenses so that your sentence might be lengthened? Were you formally charged with "priors"? Were the charges of priors dropped in plea bargaining, not considered in sentencing, or used to increase the sentence?*

The responses were as follows (figures show percentage of the sample of 49):

Prosecutor threatened priors	59.1
Prosecutor formally charged priors	40.8
Priors were:	
dropped in plea bargaining	40
not considered in sentencing	10
used to increase sentence	45
don't know	5

Considering that the average number of major convictions among the interviewees exceeded six, the finding that less than half the sample (41 percent) had priors filed against them and that less than one-fifth (18 percent) received an aggravated sentence as a result suggests that prosecutors filed priors for purposes other than of simply increasing the sentences of these offenders.[48]

---

[44] D. J. Newman, *Conviction: The Determination of Guilt or Innocence without Trial*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1969, p. 69.

[45] *Felony Arrests: Their Prosecution and Disposition in New York City's Courts*, 1977, p. 95

[46] See, for example, *California Penal Code*, Secs. 1203, 3024, 12022, and 12022.5.

[47] *California Penal Code*, Sec. 12021.

[48] These results are consistent with other studies. For example, in the earlier-cited Rand research on police investigation, a random sample of 40 robbery prosecutions contained only five instances of prior felony allegations, and in all five cases the special allegations were omitted from the final charges to which pleas were taken.

Statutes pertaining to habitual offenders allow the imposition of greater punishment on the grounds of past criminal record and present convictions. In California, for example, the minimum state prison term for a conviction on first-degree robbery is five years (*Penal Code*, Sec. 211a), and at least one-third of this minimum term must be served before the offender is eligible for parole (*Penal Code*, Sec. 3049). By contrast, under the habitual criminal statute (*Penal Code*, Sec. 644), an offender whose present conviction is for robbery or one of 13 other specified felonies and who had two or three prior convictions (separately tried and terms separately served) for any of 20 specified felonies may be declared an habitual criminal and sentenced to state prison for life—with a minimum term of nine years (two priors) or twelve years (three priors) before becoming eligible for parole.

Prosecutors have the discretion to apply these statutes, but Klein has found that they are little used.[49] Nevertheless, by threatening to impose them, a prosecutor may be able to elicit a plea of guilty, information about a fence, or testimony against accomplices.[50]

The interview instrument asked:

> *In the proceeding leading to your current incarceration, did the prosecutor ever threaten to allege that you were legally an habitual offender so that your sentence might be lengthened? Were you formally charged as an habitual offender? Were the charges dropped in plea bargaining, not considered in sentencing, or used to increase your sentence?*

Responses were as follows (percentage of 49):

Prosecutor threatened to allege habitual offender status	37.6
Prosecutor formally charged habitual offender status	6.1
Habitual offender charges were:	
dropped in plea bargaining	—
not considered in sentencing	—
used to increase sentence	—
don't know	100

These data support the view that habitual offender statutes are used mainly as a threat rather than actually being applied, possibly because of the severity of the penalties they entail.

A prosecutor can exploit the criminal record of a repeat offender in ways other than those discussed above. In many jurisdictions felony priors can be used to attack the defendant's credibility if he testifies (see, for example, *California Evidence Code*, Sec. 788). On the other hand, the trial court has the discretion to exclude priors to counter attempts to impeach the defendant (see, for example, *California Evidence Code*, Sec. 352). Furthermore, the prosecutor can make sentencing recommendations to the sentencing judge that emphasize the defendant's prior convictions.

---

[49] John F. Klein, "Habitual Offender Legislation and the Bargaining Process," *The Criminal Law Quarterly*, August 1973.

[50] F. W. Miller, *Prosecution: The Decision to Charge a Suspect with a Crime*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1968, p. 207.

The LEAA has recently funded a program specifically to improve the prosecution of habitual offenders. Now operating in 18 cities,[51] the program provides prosecutorial units with experienced attorneys and investigative assistance. In contrast to traditional practice, a single attorney is assigned to prosecute a career offender for the duration of the case, from filing the charges through all subsequent proceedings.

Although the program is relatively new and a final evaluation is not available, the preliminary performance statistics look promising. The likelihood of indictment, conviction, and prison sentence has increased and the amount of time between filing and disposition has decreased. So far, 585 defendants have been convicted through 11 of these units, with an average adjudication time from arrest to final disposition of about 84 days, a conviction rate of 95 percent, and an average prison sentence of 21 years.[52]

Such results have prompted many jurisdictions to initiate programs on their own with local financing. Public response has generally been favorable, and these special prosecutorial programs are likely to expand rapidly in the coming months.

Sentence Severity. In the course of a criminal proceeding, the court has several opportunities to relate its treatment of the defendant to his criminal history; for example it may permit impeachment of his testimony by evidence of prior felony convictions. Our interviews were concerned only with sentencing, particularly the sentences the respondents had received for their landmark convictions:

> *Do you think that your sentence was about the same as those of other defendants in similar cases? If different, was it much lighter, somewhat lighter, more severe, or much more severe?*

Table 23 displays the responses, by career period.

The most notable finding is that only for the present incarceration did a heavy majority (84 percent) of those who felt that their sentencing was different believe that it was more severe. We learned that these opinions were based overwhelmingly on the belief that their record of prior incarcerations was responsible.

Earlier studies have found a positive correlation between the likelihood of receiving a prison sentence and the length of the term imposed, on the one hand, and the defendant's prior record, on the other. A Rand study estimated that in Los Angeles County prior to 1973, a defendant who was convicted and sentenced on a robbery charge had a likelihood of 0.10 of being sent to prison if he had no prior record; 0.15 with a minor prior record; 0.17 with a major prior record; and 0.50 with a prior prison record.[53] A Rand study of performance measures for felony proceedings found that in Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon, sentences were much more severe for defendants with a prior record.[54] A study of 676 Colorado offenders

---

[51] Houston, New Orleans, Salt Lake City, San Diego, Boston, Detroit, New York, Dallas, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Miami, Las Vegas, Memphis, Louisville, Albuquerque, Portland (Oregon), Columbus (Ohio), and Kalamazoo (Michigan). Plans are to double this number in 1977.

[52] This information reflects performance through December 1976. It was obtained from Philip Cohen, coordinator of the Career Criminal Program, National Legal Data Center, Thousand Oaks, California.

[53] P. W. Greenwood et al., *Prosecution of Adult Felony Defendants in Los Angeles County*, Lexington Books, D.C. Heath, Lexington, Mass, 1976, p. 41.

[54] S. Wildhorn, M. Lavin, and A. Pascal, *Indicators of Justice: Measuring the Performance of Prosecution, Defense, and Court Agencies Involved in Felony Proceedings*, The Rand Corporation, R-1918-DOJ, June 1976, p. 118.

Table 23

Opinions of Sentence Severity
(%)

Opinion	Juvenile Period (N = 32)	Young Adult Period (N = 36)	Adult Period (N = 40)
Sentence about the same	59.4	55.6	52.5
Sentence different	40.6	44.4	47.5
Much lighter	7	18	—
Somewhat lighter	36	23	16
More severe	50	27	42
Much more severe	7	32	42

observed that the greater the number of prior arrests, the more likely the defendant would receive a prison or reformatory sentence.[55] The previously cited Vera Institute study reported that sentence severity was greatly affected by the defendant's prior record. For example, a prison sentence of over one year was rarely imposed on a defendant who did not have a prison record (1 percent), but nearly one-third of the defendants with a prior prison record received prison sentences of over one year. The study concluded that judges, in imposing prison sentences, responded more to the defendant's prior record than to the current charge.

Treatment by Defense Counsel

The habitual offender's interaction with his defense counsel differs in character from that with other parts of the criminal justice system. At least in theory, the quality of legal representation that the offender receives is not affected by his criminal record. On the other hand, the retention of private counsel, despite its cost, is said to be the hallmark of a defendant who is experienced in criminal proceedings. As one offender recalled:

> You want to know how I always avoided prison? I always retained private counsel, that's how. I have four arrests for armed robbery, but each time my lawyer was able to get me off for some reason or another. Even on another two arrests, when I was convicted, I got probation and another two I got a suspended sentence—and these were all for felonies. When I finally made it to prison, I was classified as a first-timer, and was treated pretty well. Little did they know that I had been involved in crime for a hell of a long time. That lawyer was really good to me, even if he did cost me a bundle. *"How did you pay for the lawyer?"* Well, what do you think? I was involved in crime, remember?

The interviewees were asked who had represented them in court. The responses in Table 24 suggest that the experience of the offender quoted above is not representative of this sample.

---

[55] Charles D. Weller, *Characteristics and Recidivism of Adult Felony Offenders in Denver*, U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, Denver High Impact Program, 1974.

69

Table 24

TYPE OF DEFENSE COUNSEL
(%)

Type of Counsel	Juvenile Period (N =42)	Young Adult Period (N = 48)	Adult Period (N = 45)	Entire Career (N = 135)
Public defender	26.2	56.3	64.4	49.6
Private counsel	9.5	16.7	17.8	14.8
Court-appointed counsel	2.4	2.1	8.9	4.4
None	35.7	8.3	—	14.1
Self	4.8	4.2	—	3.0
Unknown	21.4	12.5	8.9	14.1

The substantial proportion who recalled that they had no representation at the proceeding that led to their first juvenile incarceration is noteworthy. It may simply reveal a lack of understanding (or faulty memory) about the roles of various individuals in court. Of course, these offenders were old enough that their landmark juvenile conviction occurred generally before the *Gault* case, in which the U.S. Supreme Court declared the juvenile's constitutional right to counsel.[56] California, however, accorded juveniles the right to counsel some years before *Gault*.[57] We cannot say how many of the 15 interviewees who reported being unrepresented at their landmark juvenile conviction would recall having made a voluntary and intelligent waiver of the right to counsel.

Lack of representation by counsel declined in this sample's later career periods, and use of private counsel increased insignificantly. But most of the interviewees relied on the public defender, for the expected reason, lack of money. One offender gave as his reason the desire not to waste money: "I'm going to get it anyway, so why waste dollars?"

CORRECTIONAL TREATMENT

Correctional systems have tried to modify the antisocial behavior of offenders who come within their jurisdiction. Prison treatment programs and determination of the amount of time actually to be served have been geared to this aim. Our interviewees, by selection, had been previously exposed to correctional treatment. On the average, they had served 2.2 prior terms of imprisonment (not including returns for parole violation or escape), and the first prison incarceration was preceded by 2.2 felony convictions. We asked them about the earlier incarcerations as well as the current one, to learn about their adjustment to penal institutions, their degree of participation in prison treatment programs, and their reactions to the treatment. We were particularly interested in the differences in responses from career period to period.

---

[56] *In re Gault*, 387 U.S.1, 87 S.Ct. 1428, 18 L.Ed.2d 527 (1967).

[57] For example, *In re Alexander*, 152 C.A.2d 458 (1957)—ten years before *Gault*—held that juvenile proceedings must conform to constitutional guarantees of due process. In 1961, the California legislature added Sections 633 and 644 to the *Welfare and Institutions Code*, to provide for notice of the right to counsel at all stages of a juvenile proceeding and for appointment of counsel to defend indigent minors and parents.

Institutional Adjustment

A felon without previous prison experience may have to make drastic personal adjustments in coming into the restrictive and isolated prison environment. But many adult entrants are already oriented to the prison subculture and find it acceptable. It has been surmised that habitual offenders, because of their repeated incarcerations, develop strong allegiances to the prison subculture. These allegiances are believed to be functional in reducing the "pains of imprisonment." According to Sykes and Messinger, "As a population of prisoners moves in the direction of solidarity, as demanded by the inmate code, the pains of imprisonment become less severe."[58] McCorkle and Korn advance a related thesis, that prison solidarity in opposition to authorities enables the inmate to "reject his rejectors" instead of himself. That is, convicts are supported by their peers in a set of definitions and attitudes maintaining that their criminality is the fault of society and not their own.[59] Irwin and Cressey suggest that some elements of institutional culture are indigenous to penal facilities, whereas others are examples of "latent culture" brought from the outside.[60] In their view the first offender experiences the pains of imprisonment and societal rejection, but the recidivism-prone, crime-wise working-class prisoner is less likely to experience a prison sentence as a severe societal rejection. If so, the deterrent effects of punishment would diminish with each successive term of imprisonment.

The majority of offenders said they had no difficulty in adjusting to prison life. As one offender said:

> When I got to prison it seemed that everybody I met in Whittier [reformatory] was there. For the first month or so it was kind of like a high school reunion for me—it was pretty neat. No, I had no trouble in adjusting to prison. Why should I? I'd played all the silly games before.

Table 25 shows the responses to the following interview question:

> *While you were institutionalized for this landmark offense, how much trouble did you have adjusting? If you had difficulty, was it because of your behavior, the guards, other inmates, the programs, or other reasons?*

The differences in the sample proportions experiencing difficulty from period to period are insignificant. As regards the source of adjustment difficulty, other inmates became increasingly less a source of difficulty as more prison experience was acquired.

Institutional Treatment Programs

Some have viewed confinement as the setting for rehabilitation through the

---

[58] Gresham Sykes and Sheldon Messinger, "The Inmate Social System," *Theoretical Studies in Social Organization of the Prison*, Social Science Research Council, Pamphlet 15, New York, 1960.

[59] Richard Korn and Lloyd McCorkle, *Criminology and Penology*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1959, pp. 515-530.

[60] John Irwin and Donald R. Cressey, "Thieves, Convicts and the Inmate Culture," *Social Problems*, Vol. 10, Fall 1962, pp. 145-155.

Table 25

DIFFICULTY IN ADJUSTING TO PENAL INSTITUTIONS
(%)

	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
	Adjustment Difficulty		
	(N = 32)	(N = 39)	(N = 40)
A lot	21.9	25.6	25.0
Some	31.2	25.6	15.0
None	46.9	48.7	60.0
	Source of Difficulty		
	(N = 16)	(N = 20)	(N = 16)
My behavior	37.5	45.0	50.0
Guards	6.2	10.0	12.5
Other inmates	56.3	25.0	6.3
Programs	—	20.0	18.8
Other	—	—	12.5

inmate's participation in individual psychotherapy, group counseling, academic education, and vocational training programs. We asked the interviewees about their participation in programs, their assessment of the usefulness of these activities, and their reasons for participating. Of particular interest to us was the degree of participation in the third landmark incarceration relative to earlier ones.

> *During this (landmark) incarceration, did you participate in vocational training, individual counseling, group counseling, educational, drug and alcohol, or any other treatment programs?*

The affirmative responses, expressed as percentages of the sample of 49, are shown in Table 26.

Table 26

PARTICIPATION IN TREATMENT PROGRAMS
(%)

Program	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
Vocational training	20.8	28.6	28.5
Individual counseling	4.2	16.4	8.2
Group counseling	6.2	32.6	28.5
Education	29.1	18.4	16.3
Drug and alcohol	2.1	10.2	8.2
Other	2.1	2.1	6.2
At least one program	42.9	57.1	63.3
At least one program—all landmark incarcerations		93.9	

The generally low degree of participation is noteworthy, particularly in view of the interviewees' needs. For example, as discussed elsewhere in this report, a large majority were deficient in training and education and were users of drugs and alcohol. A slight trend toward increased participation is shown in the proportion participating in at least one program. Increased participation in the later periods might reflect (1) the felon's desire to prepare for a noncriminal lifestyle, (2) the felon's learning to act in ways that facilitate earlier release, or (3) the greater availability of programs in recent years. The reasons for the moderately larger participation during the third landmark incarceration are indicated below.

We asked the interviewees whether any of the programs in the institution were useful, and if so, which ones. The responses are shown in Table 27.

Table 27

USEFULNESS OF TREATMENT PROGRAMS
(%)

Usefulness	Juvenile Period (N = 42)	Young Adult Period (N = 48)	Adult Period (N = 46)
Prison programs are useful	50.0	57.1	86.2
Useful programs			
Vocational training	60.0	56.3	40.0
Individual counseling	—	25.0	4.0
Group counseling	—	18.8	32.0
Educational	50.0	37.5	24.0
Drug and alcohol	—	12.5	16.0
Other	10.0	12.5	4.0

A markedly higher proportion of the interviewees found the treatment programs useful during the third landmark incarceration. Among those who thought the programs useful generally, there was considerable variation in the proportion favorably assessing individual programs. Vocational training and educational programs were given substantial but declining proportions of favorable assessment, while group counseling received a growing amount of approval.

Finally, we asked:

> *Why did you participate in institutional programs? Was it because participation was required, you sincerely hoped to benefit, you learned to play the game and "fake" participation, you thought it would help your release, or another reason?*

Table 28 shows the distribution of responses.

These responses strongly suggest a changing pattern of motivation. The third landmark incarceration reflected not only a greater amount of overall participation and more voluntary actions, but also a more sincere desire to benefit.

The interviewees generally believed there was no association between prison programs and postrelease adjustment. An inmate who said he "sincerely hoped to

Table 28

REASON FOR PARTICIPATING IN TREATMENT PROGRAMS
(%)

Reason	Juvenile Period (N = 17)	Young Adult Period (N = 27)	Adult Period (N = 31)
Required	70.6	40.7	3.2
Sincerely hoped to benefit	23.5	37.3	67.7
Played the game	—	7.4	—
Thought it would help release	—	11.1	22.6
Other	5.9	3.7	6.5

benefit" from a vocational program denied that this meant he desired rehabilitation. Many offenders, like the one quoted below, thought that rehabilitation came "from the heart" and had nothing to do with prison programs.

> Sure I may be able to get a better job when I get out because of this training, but that doesn't necessarily mean I will stop crime altogether. I have seen plenty of guys who work and do crimes too. If you have a job it helps to cover for you—with friends, family, and so forth. You should know that someone who is working isn't necessarily "rehabilitated." This is a mistake that police, parole officers, and everyone makes, and it works to the con's advantage. I don't think I will go back into crime, but that feeling came from within—it wasn't anything this prison did for me. I don't think you or anyone else can help a potential offender, an actual offender, or whatever. I think it has to start from within, and the recidivism rate even with loads of counseling bears this out. I think that a person . . . has to have basic intelligence; otherwise there's no way to beat crime in any way, shape, or form. Most of these convicts, ex-convicts, or whatever, constantly bullshit each other. They reinforce each other's rather absurd opinions about ways to go about doing things. Their idea of getting their head straight is in their arm. Anyone who subscribes to an artificial or synthetic solution to reality is absurd. There's no way you are going to correct it. At least I haven't seen it. Everyone is unique, and what works for you won't work for someone else. I don't believe rehabilitation can be injected.

Priority in Treatment for the Habitual Offender

We have noted that about half the interviewees (43-63 percent) participated in at least one treatment program during each landmark incarceration. Some observers might regard this proportion as low and argue that the habitual offender should be singled out for intensive treatment. The prisons in most states do not handle career offenders very differently from other offenders once they are part of the inmate population. A recent survey of 592 state correctional facilities showed that only 42 separated first offenders from repeat offenders.[61] California's penal institutions vary in type and security classification to fit different inmate requirements.

---

[61] U.S. Bureau of Census, *U.S. State Correctional Facilities*, Washington, D.C., 1975.

The security classifications minimum, medium, and maximum denote entire facilities or parts of facilities that restrict an inmate's movement in different degrees. In most larger state correctional systems, offenders enter at reception or diagnostic centers and are assigned security classifications based on a number of factors, including prior record, severity of current offense, age, and employment record. Once the inmate becomes a resident of the facility selected, his behavior governs his custodial classification.

Given these facts, it is impossible to assess how many serious habitual offenders participate and how well they fare in institutional treatment programs. In some institutions, violent offenders are isolated in maximum security units but are the object of no unique rehabilitative attention. Esselstyn, in his survey of 26 selected correctional systems in the United States, found that only three—those in California and Washington and in Hennepin County, Minnesota—identify the violent offender in order to deal specifically with his problem of violence.[62]

Prison treatment is available to inmates on a voluntary basis or by mandate when the staff decides that participation in a certain program would be beneficial. In some institutions—including California Men's Colony, where our sample was incarcerated—the inmate's background is reviewed when he enters, and then a diagnostic program is recommended for him. The carrying out of the program is, however, subject to the availability of facilities, the inmate's custodial classification, the institution's operational situation, and other factors. In the California system, group counseling is recommended for virtually all offenders; prison classification committees also generally recommend that all inmates enroll in vocational training, academic education, and recreational programs but give no assurance of early release as a result of participation.

RELEASE AND POSTRELEASE TREATMENT

Parole Treatment

Habitual offenders may be subject to limitations on the granting of parole release. Laws vary widely among the states: some allow no release on parole to prisoners with a certain number of prior felony convictions, while others require repeat offenders to serve a stated minimum number of years before parole is possible.[63] Once eligible for parole, an habitual offender is almost certain to find his criminal record a marked disadvantage in deliberations by the parole board, which typically has broad discretionary powers. Moreover, an habitual offender whose plea bargaining has resulted in a shorter maximum sentence may find this gain nullified by the parole process. Research has indicated that the ratio between the time served and the sentence originally imposed tends to increase as the plea-bargained reduction in sentence increases.[64]

Dawson, in his study of sentencing, identified an inmate's prior record as a key

[62] T. C. Esselstyn, "The Violent Offender and Corrections," unpublished paper submitted to the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967, pp. 1-6.

[63] R. O. Dawson, *Sentencing: The Decision as to Type, Length, and Conditions of Sentence*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1969.

[64] H. Joo Shin, "Do Lesser Pleas Pay?: Accommodations in the Sentencing and Parole Processes," *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Vol. 1, March 1973, pp. 27-42.

factor in the parole board's estimate of an offender's likely adjustment to parole. In Michigan, for example, the parole board does not proceed with a hearing unless a presentence report of the inmate's actual criminal conduct is at hand.[65] One's criminal record is regarded as evidence of his potential for "going straight" if released on parole. Dawson states: "Other factors being equal, it will take more evidence of change in attitude to convince the parole board that an inmate with a long record has reformed, than would be needed for an inmate without such a record."[66]

Release on parole is widely viewed by correction officials, legislators, judges, and the public as a way station between incarceration and freedom. In theory, a parole board seeks to release an inmate when his prospects are best for leading a crime-free life "on the street," with aid from a community supervision program. In California, parole has been a frequent mode of release. Once the offender is imprisoned under California's indeterminate sentencing statutes (specifying rather widely separated minimum and maximum terms), the Adult Authority determines the actual time served, which often culminates in parole release before the maximum term.

We asked the interviewees whether they had been released on parole from their first two landmark incarcerations and whether they were to be released on parole from the current incarceration. The distribution of responses is shown in Table 29.

Table 29

PRIOR/EXPECTED RELEASE ON PAROLE
(%)

Release on Parole?	Juvenile Period (N = 42)	Young Adult Period (N = 48)	Adult Period (N = 46)
Yes	70.0	77.8	97.5
No	30.0	22.2	2.5

The parole officer's role has both a supervisory aspect (embodying legal authority and enforcement) and a therapeutic aspect (administering treatment). In theory, he must enforce parole regulations and initiate revocation proceedings if the rules are violated. It has been observed, however, that criminal violations of parole are usually ascertained by police rather than by parole officers.

In practice, a parole officer exercises wide discretion in enforcing the conditions of parole. A reasonable hypothesis is that the more serious a parolee's criminal record, the more a parole officer emphasizes his policing functions over his treatment functions. This hypothesis prompted the following question about the stringency of parole supervision, asked of those who had a history of parole release.

---

[65] Dawson, p. 224.

[66] Ibid., p. 271.

> *How strictly were you monitored by your parole officer after release from your landmark incarceration? Did the parole officer's supervision affect your involvement in crime?*

The distribution of responses is shown in Table 30. Despite the considerable proportion (30 percent) who recalled no parole monitoring, the changes in the distribution of responses from the first to the second landmark parole seem consistent with the hypothesis above. Parole supervision was obviously ineffectual for this sample.

Table 30

PAROLE SUPERVISION
(%)

Parole Supervision	Juvenile Period (N = 19)	Young Adult Period (N = 28)
Degree		
Very strict	10.5	17.9
Somewhat strict	10.5	35.7
Not very strict	47.4	17.9
None	31.6	28.6
Effect on crime		
Encouraged	10.5	11.1
No effect	63.2	81.5
Discouraged	26.3	7.4

One offender described his experience with his parole officer this way:

> The only time I saw my parole officer was to go in once a month and give a urine sample [to test for the presence of drugs.] I would also drop off a form which I had filled out at home—it would give my present address and whether or not I was employed. I don't think he even knew my name without looking at the form—and he was supposed to keep a close eye on us once he had the real bad guys on his caseload. Well, he didn't bother me and I didn't bother him. It seemed to work out real well. He was supposed to come to my house once in a while to check up on me, but I never saw him there in the six months I was out.

Another offender felt his officer was responsible for his engaging in burglaries rather than robberies:

> One time I was arrested on an assault charge and the police called my parole officer. When he showed up, he told me to stay away from personal crimes or he would violate me. So I started doing burglaries—I thought it was kind of strange, but it was like he didn't mind knowing I was doing burglaries as long as I didn't hurt anyone.

In the parole officer's therapeutic role, he is supposed to help the parolee develop alternatives to criminal behavior. This help may take the form of counseling, finding the parolee a job, referring him to community programs, and the like.

It is outside the scope of this study to examine the performance of parole officers. Instead, we addressed the offenders' perceived needs in rejoining society; their postrelease plans and expectations; and the inception of recidivism. The following paragraphs explore what the habitual offender saw and did in the absence or ineffectual presence of postrelease treatment.

Postrelease Needs, Plans, and Actions

In a recent study, Cohen et al. described eleven needs that the released offender may have: occupational training and placement, education, financial help, counseling, social-recreational outlets, family relationships, living arrangements, alcohol control, drug control, medical attention, and legal help.[67] The authors hypothesized that unmet needs correlate with a return to prison: if needs are met, the return rate will be lower. Glaser, in his study of prison systems, concluded that the recidivism rate of adult male offenders varies inversely with their postrelease employment.[68]

The interviewees were asked:

> *When you were (are) released from prison, what did (will) you need most? Of these needs, which was (is) the most important?*

The responses are shown in Table 31.

Table 31

NEEDS AFTER RELEASE FROM PRISON
(%)

Needs	Juvenile Period (N = 24)	Young Adult Period (N = 38)	Adult Period (N = 38)
Place to live	29.2 (8.3)	34.2 (13.1)	39.5 (5.3)
Job	58.3 (37.5)	71.0 (40.4)	63.2 (44.7)
Psychological or family counseling	12.5 (—)	10.5 (8.0)	10.5 (7.9)
Drugs or alcohol rehabilitation	8.3 (8.3)	13.2 (5.2)	26.3 (10.5)
Criminal contacts	— (—)	5.3 (5.2)	— (—)
Someone who cares	54.2 (37.5)	23.7 (15.7)	28.9 (23.7)
Other	8.3 (—)	8.0 (8.0)	7.9 (7.9)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses show the percentage identifying the need as most important.

The pattern of needs expressed was similar from period to period except for drugs and alcohol rehabilitation and someone who cared. The need most often expressed was for employment, and the majority who expressed it felt that it was their most important need. The majority of those who expressed a need for someone who cared also felt that it was their most important need.

---

[67] Murray Cohen et al., *A Study of Community Based Needs in Massachusetts*, Massachusetts Department of Corrections, Research Report, Springfield, Mass., June 1972.

[68] Daniel Glaser, *The Effectiveness of a Prison and Parole System*, abridged ed., The Bobbs Merrill Co., Inc., Indianapolis, 1969.

That many felons recidivate soon after release from prison is a fact. It underscores the question of whether this sample wanted to pursue a crime-free life after their incarceration but felt compelled to return to criminal activities by external factors such as unemployment, or whether they had no intention of going straight in the first place. The interviewees were asked to reflect realistically about their feelings and plans at the time of release from their landmark incarcerations, as follows:

> *What did you think you would do when released from prison? If I had asked you upon your release to tell me where you would be in three months, what would you have said?*

The distribution of responses is shown in Table 32.

Table 32

EXPECTED POSTRELEASE CONDUCT
(%)

Expected Conduct	Juvenile Period (N = 42)	Young Adult Period (N = 48)
Plans before Release		
Commit criminal acts		
and hope for better luck	16.6	12.5
but plan more carefully	9.5	16.6
but less dangerous offenses	—	—
but less frequently	—	—
Stop criminal acts		
but not get a job right away	4.7	2.0
and get a job	35.7	52.0
Do not know	33.3	16.6
Expectation Three Months after Release		
Still employed	26.1	43.7
Involved in crime	19.0	27.0
In jail	2.4	2.0
On welfare	—	—
Could not have said	40.4	27.0
Other	12.0	—

We asked two questions to reveal how soon the sample recidivated:

> *Estimate how many weeks after your release it took to get involved in crime again. Estimate how many weeks you were committing crimes before you were arrested again.*

The distribution of responses is shown in Table 33. The sample medians were as follows:

	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period
Median time (weeks) between release and reinvolvement in crime	17-20	9-12
Median time (weeks) between reinvolvement and first arrest	11-20	11-20

These responses suggest that whatever means might have reduced the likelihood of recidivism after release, they would have had to be applied promptly, for the interviewees generally resumed criminal activity within a few months, and their rearrests occurred only a few months later.

Table 33

INCEPTION OF RECIDIVISM
(%)

Time (weeks)	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period
Between Release and Reinvolvement in Crime		
	(N = 27)	(N = 31)
1 or less	11.1	12.9
2-4	3.7	19.4
5-8	22.2	—
9-12	3.7	19.4
13-16	7.4	3.2
17-20	3.7	—
21-40	25.9	9.7
41-80	11.1	12.9
81 or more	11.1	22.6
Between Reinvolvement and First Arrest		
	(N = 28)	(N = 32)
1 or less	—	6.3
2-5	14.3	18.7
6-10	21.4	15.6
11-20	17.9	18.7
21-30	3.6	9.4
31-40	3.6	—
41-50	7.1	9.4
51-60	17.9	—
61 or more	14.3	21.9

Some offenders did have crime-free periods after release from prison, but they were usually brief.

> Right as soon as I got out, there was a period I felt I might be able to go straight. Everybody that comes out feels that way. I had been in prison three times, and each time I truly thought I was going to go straight. You know, this is it, if I can do this or that, this is it. I'll never get arrested again. I came out and I wanted to go to work, and I wanted to find a job. I think that I probably went around for about three months before I started doing

> any crimes again. I could have found a menial job, but I didn't want to work that hard. I don't know why I started again, it just seemed like the easiest thing to do.

Other offenders spoke of committing crimes within days after release.

> I got off the bus at the Valley bus station, took a cab to my old neighborhood, walked down to a familiar liquor store, and robbed it. I wanted to make sure that I still had it in me. It's like getting back up on a horse after you've been thrown off. I wanted to show myself that I wasn't scared.

Finally, we asked the interviewees whether and how they could have been deterred:

> *Would any of the following factors have deterred your return to crime?* (Factors are specified below.)

The distribution of the responses is shown in Table 34.

Table 34

DETERRENTS TO RECIDIVISM
(%)

Deterring Factors	Juvenile Period (N = 42)	Young Adult Period (N = 48)
Probability of a longer sentence	7.1	12.5
Harsher treatment while in prison	—	8.3
Stricter parole supervision	7.1	2.0
Certainty of being caught	21.4	16.6
Other	4.7	8.3
Nothing would have deterred	59.7	52.3

The majority felt nothing would have prevented their return to crime. Among those who felt they could have been deterred, the certainty of apprehension would have been the most influential deterrent.

Offenders were eager to explain why nothing would deter their criminality. A common theme was that crime was their lifestyle, the only thing they felt comfortable doing.

> I wasn't equipped to handle the outside world. I always felt really uncomfortable with straight people. I remember working in a dry cleaners once—I had nothing in common with those people. I was anxious to get back with my own kind. I deliberately got myself busted when things got too bad. I'd go into the joint [jail]; I knew how to function there. Outside, I didn't know what my role was; I was a hustler, robber, and junkie. Those things are lifestyles, not just a category that appears on a rap sheet.

Reincarceration

The effect that imprisonment has on the continuation of criminal careers, though often debated, is little understood. On the one hand, imprisonment is a severe form of punishment that should deter offenders from further criminal involvement. Logically, the more severe the punishment, the greater the reduction in crime. On the other hand, the prison experience may increase the offenders' inclination toward crime if it has fostered closer relationships with criminals, engendered frustration, and made it difficult to obtain employment. Then, imprisonment is counterproductive to reducing crime.

Our combined data from the respondents and their rap sheets enabled us to examine the possible association of the interval between incarcerations with three other factors: the length of the immediately preceding term, age when released from it, and the number of prior incarcerations.

Table 35 displays the data pertaining to the first of these associations. Despite the indication that the median between-incarceration intervals increase as the immediately preceding term gets longer, the irregular variation in the means (related to the relatively large standard deviations) suggests that an association between these two factors is at best weak. In other words, these data do not persuasively support the hypothesis that a longer prison term more strongly deters an offender from future serious crimes.

Table 35

LENGTH OF INTERVAL BETWEEN INCARCERATIONS (MONTHS)
RELATED TO LENGTH OF PRECEDING TERM

Length of Immediately Preceding Term (months)	Distribution Characteristics of Time between Incarcerations			
	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of Intervals
0-7	5.0	20.7	39.9	39
8-12	8.25	14.95	21.0	41
13-21	10.5	19.6	22.85	42
22-35	10.25	14.7	18.5	41
36-170	6.5	15.15	25.3	40

Table 36 similarly explores the association between age when released from the immediately preceding term and the length of the interval until reincarceration. The notable feature of Table 36 is the substantial change from the juvenile period (which had longer intervals between incarcerations) to later periods. But given the results of Table 21 (p. 39) concerning the change in conviction and incarceration rates between juvenile and adult years, we cannot infer that Table 36 implies lesser levels of criminality in the earlier years.

Finally, Table 37 addresses the association between the number of prior incarcerations and the length of the interval between incarcerations. At most, Table 37 indicates a bilevel association between the two factors. That is, the intervals between incarcerations tended to be longer with three or fewer prior incarcerations; with more than three priors, street time was consistently short.

Table 36

LENGTH OF INTERVAL BETWEEN INCARCERATIONS (MONTHS) RELATED TO AGE AT RELEASE FROM PRECEDING TERM

	Distribution Characteristics of Time between Incarcerations			
Age (years)	**Median**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Number of Intervals**
18 and under	13.0	30.6	42.2	41
19-22	9.25	13.2	14.0	41
23-25	6.0	11.0	17.0	39
26-31	7.0	14.2	19.1	42
32 and over	7.5	15.65	25.0	40

Table 37

LENGTH OF INTERVAL BETWEEN INCARCERATIONS (MONTHS) RELATED TO NUMBER OF PRIOR INCARCERATIONS

	Distribution Characteristics of Time between Incarcerations			
Number of Prior Incarcerations	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of Intervals
0	11.75	26.7	39.4	49
1	9.25	14.2	17.0	45
2	9.0	15.6	21.9	39
3	13.5	24.7	28.7	26
4	3.7	5.2	5.7	19
5	3.1	4.7	3.9	15
6	7.25	9.3	6.2	7
7	7.0	7.0	4.2	2
8	1.0	1.0	—	1

REVIEW

In summary, data from official criminal records and from the interviewees themselves enabled us to estimate the arrest, conviction, and incarceration rates of these offenders as a group. These rates for individual offense types and groups of offense types generally differed substantially from those of much broader populations of offenders. Explanations for the differences included the underreporting of crimes in national data, the underreporting of juvenile arrests on our interviewees' rap sheets, and the rarity of nonjudicial dispositions after arrest for this sample compared with offenders in general.

In examining the rates calculated for our sample, we observed the following:

- Whether the average number of arrests per unit of time increased or decreased as criminal careers advanced depended on whether calendar-time or street-time units were used as the base. This observation is pertinent to the conclusions of earlier researchers that frequency of arrest decreased with advancing age.

- For this sample, the likelihood of being arrested, convicted, and incarcerated tended to increase in the later stages of the career, a trend that was not the result only of changes in the types of crime committed.

Our examination of the length of periods between successive incarcerations revealed only limited associations with factors such as the length of the immediately preceding term, age when released from it, and the number of previous incarcerations. We observed weak indications that a longer incarceration was followed by more street time before reincarceration; that incarcerations early in a career were more widely separated than those later; and that intervals of street time were longer for offenders with a smaller number of priors than for those with a larger number.

Overall, the broadest impression conveyed by these data is that this sample of habitual offenders became less "successful" as their criminal careers progressed, if success is measured by avoiding involvement with the criminal justice system.

V. CRIMINAL SOPHISTICATION

In this study, criminal sophistication refers to (1) the extent and nature of planning and preparation for property crimes (including robbery), and (2) skill in executing them and in avoiding arrest and prosecution. The development of criminal sophistication can be interpreted as an offender's reaction to the risk of apprehension and punishment.

The literature suggests the following hypotheses about criminal sophistication:

- Repeated contacts with the criminal justice system impel habitual offenders to develop sophistication.
- Planning and preparation for a crime become more routine and thorough as criminal careers progress.
- The more skilled the offender, the greater his illicit profit will be.
- The more experienced the offender, the more skilled he is in avoiding arrest and conviction.

Our interest in the validity of these propositions generated a number of interview questions—for example, about the amount and types of crime planning in the different career periods; the roles played by criminal partners, fences, and other helpers in the different career periods; the willingness of the offender to commit different types of crime as his career advanced; techniques of avoiding arrest; geographical range of criminal activity; and monetary gains from crimes.

The extent of criminal sophistication says a good deal about the performance of the criminal justice system. For example, if some offenders are much more proficient than others in avoiding apprehension, prisons should contain a disproportionate number of the less skilled criminals. And if skill in avoiding arrest increases with age, the disproportionate number of young offenders arrested would reflect this lack of skill as well as a greater incidence of crime among the young.

This section analyzes the interviewees' responses to the questions about sophistication, touching on the association of criminal sophistication with other aspects of criminal careers.

SOPHISTICATION IN PLANNING CRIMES

Crime-Planning Sophistication Score

We initially asked the interviewees the following question:

> *What kind of planning did you usually do before committing your property crimes? (Indicate all the responses that apply.)*

1. Staked out the location; learned when it was most crowded.
2. Visited the location several times.
3. Developed a new identity (checking account, etc.).
4. Got a car; switched license plates.

5. Obtained a disguise (e.g., fake mustache).
6. Found out if the place had a burglar alarm installed.
7. Found out how much money was likely to be in the store at different times of the day.
8. Read books about how different types of crimes are committed.
9. Planned an escape route.
10. Rehearsed the crime before actually committing it.
11. Found out when police were likely to be in that area.
12. Other (describe).

For analytical purposes, a simple measure of planning sophistication was devised by weighting the responses to this question. Judging by the relative complexity of the activities involved, we assigned a weight of 1 to responses 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, and 9; and a weight of 2 to responses 3, 4, 5, 10, and 11. For an interviewee who was active in burglary or robbery during a period, the sum of the weights of the affirmative responses was his sophistication score for that period. As a single measure of a respondent's planning sophistication over his entire career, we calculated the arithmetic mean of the sophistication scores of the relevant periods.[69]

Profile of Planning Sophistication

Judging from the responses to the question above, crime planning was weak in the sample as a whole. Approximately one-quarter did no planning or preparation whatsoever for burglaries and robberies (sophistication score of 0 only); about half did none or very little (mean score less than 2); and only about one-quarter did a moderate amount or more of planning (mean score of 4 or more). For the typical offender, pre-crime planning involved only visiting the location before the crime and, less often, staking out the target.

Averaged over all interviewees who committed robberies or burglaries in a specified career period, the sophistication score varied as follows: juvenile period, 1.6; young adult period, 3.0; and adult period, 3.1. This suggests that whatever increase in sophistication takes place occurs at a relatively young age.[70]

The picture of scant crime planning and preparation is not inconsistent with the data from several earlier studies. For example, Wolcott reported that, of a sample of 81 convicted robbers, 65 percent had committed the offense for which they were incarcerated (none were bank robberies) as spur-of-the-moment acts.[71] Camp examined the crimes of 150 bank robbers and concluded that they did not often make extensive preparations or use sophisticated devices.[72] Although our sample was not characterized by actual preparation, several offenders made a notable distinction between *planning*, of which they did little, and *premeditation*, which most seemed to engage in:

---

[69] Both the period and mean sophistication scores are, by definition, on a scale from 0 to 16. No sophistication score is calculated for career periods in which the interviewee committed neither burglaries nor robberies.

[70] Among the 23 respondents who had a sophistication score for all three periods, only 5 had scores that increased twice in succession. Among the 25 who had scores in both of these periods, only 13 had scores that increased from the juvenile period to the young adult. And among the 33 who had scores in both of these periods, only 15 had scores that increased from the young adult period to the adult.

[71] G. D. Wolcott, "A Typology of Armed Robbers," M.A. thesis, Sacramento State College, 1968.

[72] G Camp, "Nothing to Lose: A Study of Bank Robbery in America," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1968.

> I never really did any planning, as you see it. I pulled robberies at random . . . without disguises or anything. I was skillful at crime, but other guys got away with just as much. You could usually do eight or ten robberies and get caught for one. I had no MO. I would change the way I did things from one time to another. But you must understand one thing, just because I didn't do "planning" as you describe it doesn't mean I didn't think about crime a lot. I had to get myself mentally ready to do crimes. This doesn't mean I planned a particular escape route for a particular crime, but I often thought through various ways of escaping if ever I was caught in particular situations. So I was thinking and preparing for crime constantly; I simply waited for the right circumstances to occur. When I saw the time was right, I would pull the job. This may look like a "spur of the moment" job to you, but actually it isn't.

While our sample was not marked by the consistent use of crime planning, we did uncover contrary instances in the course of the study. In the phase of testing our interview instrument we met an extremely sophisticated habitual offender who had been a professional bank robber. He had made a conscious decision to rob banks after weighing the risks and the gains. In preparation, he read books on bank robbery, investigated targets, prepared disguises, laid out escape routes, planned the disposal of the loot—all to increase his proficiency and reduce the risk of apprehension. He even looked up the statutory penalties he was likely to face. To convey the extensiveness of planning done by a few of the interviewees, we quote this person at some length.

> Incidentally, the reason I was never apprehended in five years was because I never had any partners, I worked alone, kept my own counsel, I wasn't on an ego trip—I wasn't shooting my mouth off to the girls I went around with, I changed my name like I changed my socks. I had four different aliases during that period—legitimate aliases where I would go down and get a California's driver's license in a different name and tell them that I was retired military or had just gotten discharged after 13 years and didn't have a current license and the only license I had was a military license. With the driver's license, I opened up savings accounts, checking accounts, and so forth. As far as the friends I had at the time—I never knew a thief in my life. Not even when I was robbing banks. I never knew a thief until I went to prison.
>
> I would go into the bank well dressed—suit and so forth, dyed hair and mustache, a couple of sweatshirts under the suit to make me look heavier, a hat to make you look taller, and never sunglasses. Never wear sunglasses. And the attache case and so forth. And I would go into the manager's outer office where his secretary was by saying I had an appointment or something like this. To make an impression on the person, I would take that 38 Colt Cobra. I wanted him to call his chief teller or whoever he considered the most reliable and tell him to take my attache case into the vault and come out with all the larger bills—no ones, fives, or tens—which, incidentally, led to my downfall, that little old line, because I may just as well have signed my name to every bank I ever robbed. So the guy would go out and bring the money back and then I would have him open the attache case in front of me to make sure that there wasn't a bug or little homing device which would trace me or whatever, and I would get an idea of how much money was in it. If it looked like a considerable sum of money, then I had transacted my business. Very rarely was anyone in the bank aware of what was

> going on. I wanted to be in and out of there in three minutes flat. So—the first bank was $41,000, and it made a tremendous impression on me. It was more money than I had ever seen before!
>
> The way I left the bank is—I never stole a car in my life—but I bought a clunker for $150 two weeks before I robbed that bank. This guy advertised in the paper, and you go, give him the money, sign the pink slip, and that's all there is to it. You never reregister it; you use it two times—driving it from where you bought it and the next time you rob the bank. Then you ditch it within one minute, however far you can get. I used to pick another shopping center within a mile or whatever of the bank, and there I'd have my other car, and I'd switch cars. And I would be wearing these dishwashing type gloves so there would be no fingerprints. Sometimes I'd let the car be running with the key in it, hoping some kid would steal it. I'd be tickled to death if he'd run off with it! And then of course I would change clothes and sometimes take the old clothes and throw them in a convenient garbage can, Goodwill box, or whatever. Then I'd take cover, more or less, whether it be a local hotel, motel, crowded part of town, and I'd just stay inside. Between 1963 and 1968 there were nine banks I robbed, most of them in California, four of them here in San Diego, two in San Francisco, two in Los Angeles, and the only one out of state was the first one. And after several bank robberies, money meant nothing! I would go down to another bank—and I think the lowest I ever got was $14,000—so I would always go out and get 10 or 20 grand—it was nothing! And it was kind of fun.

We attempted to find associations between sophistication scores and a number of other offender attributes, e.g., number of crimes committed and involvement with drugs and alcohol, but without success. The pervasively low level of crime planning among these offenders probably accounts for the absence of an association with other factors.

Preferences among Crime-Planning Measures

Table 38 shows, for each career period, the percentage of interviewees who committed burglaries and robberies in a specified period who reported using one of the twelve planning measures specified. These percentages thus indicate relative preference.

Table 38 suggests the following observations about the sample as a whole:

- The most common planning measures were a stakeout of the target and an actual visit to the premises.
- Interviewees who planned their crimes used fewer measures in the juvenile period than in later periods.
- Concern with escape (measures 4 and 9) increased markedly from the juvenile to the later periods.
- Other preferences in measures were fairly similar among the three career periods. However, a significant difference occurred between the young adult and adult periods in ascertaining the presence of a burglar alarm. The difference might be explained by the fact that only 2 interviewees reported committing burglaries in the adult period compared with 25 in the young adult, assuming that this measure was of considerably more concern to burglars than to robbers.

Table 38

PREFERENCES AMONG MEASURES FOR PLANNING BURGLARIES AND ROBBERIES

	Percentage Who Used Measure					
Planning Measure	Juvenile Period (N = 30)		Young Adult Period (N = 40)		Adult Period (N = 45)	
1. Staked out location	23.3	(1)	30.0	(3,4)	37.8	(2)
2. Visited location	20.0	(2)	47.5	(1)	40.0	(1)
3. Developed new identity	0	(11,12)	7.5	(9,10,11)	8.9	(10,11)
4. Got car	10.0	(7)	22.5	(5,6)	20.0	(6,7)
5. Provided disguise	3.3	(9,10)	10.0	(8)	20.0	(6,7)
6. Ascertained presence of burglar alarm	16.7	(3,4)	30.0	(3,4)	11.1	(8,9)
7. Ascertained times when money present	13.3	(5,6)	22.5	(5,6)	26.7	(4)
8. Read relevant books	0	(11,12)	0	(12)	0	(12)
9. Planned escape route	13.3	(5,6)	35.0	(2)	31.1	(3)
10. Rehearsed crime	6.6	(8)	7.5	(9,10,11)	11.1	(8,9)
11. Ascertained times of police presence	16.7	(3,4)	20.0	(7)	22.2	(5)
12. Other	3.3	(9,10)	7.5	(9,10,11)	8.9	(10,11)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses are the ranks of the measures in the given period.

Preference among Crimes

A facet of criminal activity that seems closely related to crime planning and preparation is the partiality for or against certain offenses, perhaps as a result of personal experiences or the influence of other criminals. It may be true that as an offender's criminal career develops, he narrows his choice of targets, becoming more aware of the risks involved and the potential take. The result may be a trend toward greater specialization at later stages of the career. One way of assessing this trend is to analyze by offense type the frequency of crimes committed; this is done in Sec. III. Another way is to pose hypothetical crimes to interviewees and ascertain their willingness to commit them in different career periods, and the reason. The reasons afford insight into the degree to which the law-enforcement system discourages potential offenders as a result of the high risks associated with particular offenses—a measure of deterrence.

> *Which of these offenses* [shown below] *would you have been willing to commit, considering what you perceive to be the risks and "take"? This does not mean you did commit these offenses but that you would have been willing to commit them during the period if given the opportunity. Why?*

Table 39 presents the distribution of responses. The results are notable in several respects, including the following:

- As juveniles, these offenders tended to prefer committing burglaries and consistently avoided all specified types of robbery; as young adults, they were less inclined toward burglary (and forgery, to a slight degree); as

Table 39

PARTIALITY AMONG SELECTED OFFENSES

Offense	Yes, Willing to Commit (%) Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period	Most Frequently Cited Reason for/against Committing
Store robbery	[illegible]2	37	70	For: Large take Against: Possible presence of armed victim or store alarm
Gas-station robbery	24	27	33	For: Easy target Against: Small take, possible presence of victim
Bank robbery	16	17	30	For: Large take Against: Too risky
Street robbery	24	16	60	For: Easy and unlimited targets Against: Too personal, small take
Burglary	81	55	44	For: Easy target, low risk of arrest Against: Requires fence, small take
Forgery/NSF	43	39	32	For: No victim contact, light punishment Against: Requires special knowledge
Drug sales	32	25	30	For: No risk, large take Against: Need contacts, risk of informants

adults they favored burglary even less, while increasingly favoring store robberies and street robberies. (This inclination is affected by our sample-selection criterion.)

- The sample was fairly constant from period to period in its willingness to sell drugs and engage in forgery. Offenders who were not willing to sell drugs as juveniles were not usually willing to do so as adults.
- Offenders were conscious of varying degrees of risk associated with different offenses. High risk was an important reason for the unwillingness to rob a bank, on the one hand, and low risk most often accounted for the willingness to sell drugs, on the other hand. However, for the majority of offenders, the take primarily governed whether they were willing to commit a crime, and risk was secondary. For instance, in the adult period, 70 percent were willing to engage in store robberies, mainly because of the large potential take. The need for special knowledge was cited only rarely, primarily with respect to breaking into safes.

- The attractiveness of robbery for this sample owed to the ease with which it could be committed. A majority said they switched to robbery from other offenses because it required little preparation and few tools, and offered unlimited potential targets. Also, robbery could be committed alone, eliminating the risk of being implicated by a partner.

The "willing to commit" responses were analyzed further to expose inclinations toward crime specialization. We noticed, for example, that some respondents were willing to commit only a single type of crime in a specified career period; in the juvenile period, 8 of 33 respondents (24 percent) would commit only burglary. If we arbitrarily define a specialized offender as one who was willing to commit no more than two of the ten given offenses in two or more career periods, only 7 of 46 respondents (15 percent) meet this definition. The sample thus did not generally see themselves as specialists in crime. They could be called "players" because they were willing to engage in many types of crime. Nevertheless, a number of offenders did apply a process of elimination in deciding to commit a particular crime. One offender explained it this way:

> When I was at Soledad I thought of bigger and better crimes to commit as soon as I was back on the street. My crimes weren't as big as some of the others that were in there. I felt criminally inferior! On the other hand, they were doing more time, too. So I began to learn to keep away from these crimes of person if you can. But then you get involved with fencing, with narcotics. Narcotics never appealed to me for personal use. I didn't believe in carting around a bunch of stolen goods. So the only thing that was easy was armed robbery. You just go in and you take care of business. It's a quick crime and it's an easy thing. If you handle it right, nobody gets hurt.

SOPHISTICATION IN EXECUTING CRIMES AND AVOIDING ARREST

Three interview questions asked the respondents about the use of partners in committing crimes. Another query asked whether persons other than crime partners helped the offender in his criminal activities. Still another set of questions focused on the circumstances and timing of arrests, particularly those that led to the landmark incarcerations. The respondents were asked whether and how they took steps to avoid arrest and conviction. Finally, an inquiry was made about the geographical distribution of crimes committed as a further indication of criminal sophistication.

Use of Partners

A popular criminological notion is that experienced offenders tend to operate in "networks," facilitating their illegal activities by the use of partners, fences, or informants.

The following questions were posed to the interviewees:

> *Did you usually plan the crimes alone, with one partner, or with more than one partner? Did you usually commit the crime alone, with one partner, or with more than one partner? Did you usually commit the crime with the same partner or partners?*

The distribution of responses is presented in Table 40. The most noticeable pattern is a decrease in the use of multiple partners over time. Few interviewees described MOs needing multiple partners after the juvenile period. The exception was commercial burglaries, where two people were in the building and one stayed outside as a lookout. Even complicated robberies, for example, where a hostage bank manager was forced to order a safe opened, were often performed alone by a sophisticated offender. In fact, the more sophisticated the offender, the more likely he was to operate alone. Offenders who judged themselves competent in crime were not willing to share the profits or risk the chance that a partner might implicate them later.

Table 40

USE OF PARTNERS IN PLANNING AND COMMITTING CRIMES
(%)

How Done	Juvenile Period		Young Adult Period		Adult Period	
	Planning	Execution	Planning	Execution	Planning	Execution
	(N = 36)	(N = 41)	(N = 43)	(N = 44)	(N = 43)	(N = 44)
Alone	30.5	31.7	51.2	40.9	58.1	56.8
With one partner	27.8	24.4	37.2	45.5	32.6	29.5
With more than one partner	41.7	43.9	11.6	13.6	9.3	13.6
		(N = 33)		(N = 26)		(N = 20)
If with partner(s), with same partner(s)	—	81.8	—	80.7	—	55.0

Sources of Help Other Than Partners

The interviewees were asked:

> *What kinds of people helped you in your illegal activities during this time? No one, fence* [receiver and concealer,] *lawyer, "square" (as a buyer or informer), drug supplier, other?*

The distribution of responses is given in Table 41.

Thus, the sample not only relied less on crime partners as time passed but also tended to rely less on help from others. When aid was given, it came most often from fences and next from drug suppliers. Period-to-period changes in this respect were not significant.

Circumstances of Arrest

If the offender was becoming more sophisticated as his career developed, the circumstances of his landmark arrests might change. For instance, we would expect the percentage "caught with the loot" to decline and the percentage arrested

Table 41

HELPERS OTHER THAN CRIME PARTNERS
(%)

Helper	Juvenile Period (N = 42)	Young Adult Period (N = 48)	Adult Period (N = 38)
No one	35.8	45.8	73.7
Fence	23.2	18.8	10.5
Lawyer	0	4.2	5.3
"Square" buyer or informer	2.3	8.3	2.6
Drug supplier	16.2	16.7	5.3
Other	2.3	6.3	2.6

through the investigative efforts of a detective to increase. The following question was asked in the interviews:

> *How were you caught for your landmark offense? At or fleeing the scene of the crime, by a detective, with the loot, by surrendering, through arrest for another crime, through an informant, other* [mutually exclusive alternatives]*? How long after the crime were you arrested?*

Table 42 presents the distribution of responses. We see at least weak indications that the circumstances of landmark arrests were less immediate and simple in the young adult and adult periods than in the juvenile period. For example, fewer than 10 percent escaped arrest for more than one week in the juvenile period as against 20-30 percent later; and a detective (presumably after investigation) made the arrest in less than 10 percent of the cases in the juvenile period compared with approximately 20 percent later. This suggests a growth of sophistication in avoiding arrest. Yet the percentage arrested near the scene of the crime remained about 40 percent as careers progressed, contradicting an inference of increased sophistication over time.

Explanations for Escaping Arrest

The interviewees were asked:

> *What do you think is the main reason you were not arrested? Not applicable because always arrested, police ineffective, your skill, changed MO/use of your imagination, offenses unknown to police, victim would not cooperate with police in the investigation, victim intimidated, your mobility, legal maneuvering?*

The distribution of responses is shown in Table 43.

Table 43 indicates two plausible trends in this sample: an increasing belief in one's proficiency in avoiding the police, and increasing reliance on mobility as a protective means.

Table 42

CIRCUMSTANCES OF ARREST LEADING TO LANDMARK INCARCERATION

(%)

Circumstance	Juvenile Period (N = 34)	Young Adult Period (N = 43)	Adult Period (N = 41)
How Caught			
Caught at or fleeing scene of crime	35.3	37.2	43.9
Arrested by detective	8.8	23.2	19.5
Caught with loot	11.8	9.3	2.4
Surrendered	2.9	2.3	0
Arrested for another crime	2.9	9.3	7.3
Through informant	35.3	18.6	26.8
Other	2.9	0	0
Time (Weeks) between Committing Crime and Arrest			
Less than 1	76	44	51
1	17	27	28
2	2	6	7
3	0	6	2
4	0	6	4
More than 4	5	11	8

Table 43

MAIN EXPLANATION FOR ESCAPING ARREST

(%)

Explanation	Juvenile Period (N = 35)	Young Adult Period (N = 39)	Adult Period (N = 33)
NA: always arrested	20.0	12.8	27.3
Police ineffective	11.4	17.9	9.1
Skill	11.4	28.2	30.3
Changed MO/use of imagination	0	0	3.0
Offenses unknown to police	22.9	5.1	0
Uncooperative victim	2.9	2.6	0
Intimidated victim	0	0	0
Mobility	2.9	10.3	21.2
Legal maneuvering	0	0	0
Other[a]	28.6	23.1	9.1

[a] Nearly all mentioned "luck" in this category.

Geographic Range of Criminal Activity

A wide geographic range of criminal activity suggests itself as a sign of sophistication. We asked the interviewees the following questions:

> *Where were most of your criminal activities committed? In your immediate neighborhood, in one city, in neighboring cities, throughout the state, all over the country (how many states)?*

Table 44 shows the distribution of responses.

Table 44 shows that these offenders extended beyond their immediate neighborhood as time passed, but not very far; most did not range farther than neighboring cities. A minority, 20-25 percent, eventually operated throughout California and in a few other states. If geographic range is a sign of sophistication in criminal activity, these results are consistent with the other indications that our sample was generally low in criminal sophistication and showed little tendency to become more sophisticated over time.

Table 44

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY
(Percent of 41 respondents)

Range	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
In immediate neighborhood	41.5	14.6	22.0
In one city	31.7	24.4	29.3
In neighboring cities	22.0	36.6	29.3
Throughout the state	2.4	9.8	7.3
All over the country:	2.4	14.6	12.2
Two states	0	33.3	20.0
Three states	100.0	33.3	20.0
Four states	0	0	20.0
Five states	0	0	20.0
More than five states	0	33.3	20.0

Fear of Arrest

The interviewees were asked:

> *Before you committed your landmark offense, how concerned were you that you might get caught? Very concerned, somewhat concerned, little concerned, not concerned—didn't care? If not concerned, why? Because you had no alternative, weren't afraid of prison, were not thinking (due to alcohol or drugs), another reason?*

Table 45 shows the distribution of responses to these questions. A high but declining proportion of the sample (75 percent in the juvenile period to about 50 percent in the adult) were little concerned or unconcerned about being caught. Of those who reported that they had been unconcerned at the time of the offense, a large minority attributed their indifference to the clouding of their thinking by drugs or alcohol. Among the "other" responses were several indicating that the desire to commit the offense overwhelmed concern about apprehension.

Table 45

FEAR OF ARREST
(%)

Degree of Concern	Juvenile Period (N = 41)	Young Adult Period (N = 44)	Adult Period (N = 42)
Very concerned	14.6	9.1	19.0
Somewhat concerned	9.8	25.0	28.6
Little concerned	24.4	31.8	9.5
Not concerned:	51.2	34.1	42.9
Had no alternative	4.1	23.1	22.7
Not afraid of prison	20.8	7.7	13.6
Not thinking (drugs, alcohol)	33.3	34.6	45.4
Other	41.7	34.6	18.2

MONETARY GAIN

Given the low level of planning sophistication among our respondents, their monetary gain from committing crimes is not as indicative of sophistication as it might be otherwise. Nevertheless, monetary gain does reflect deliberation in the choice of targets, and this relationship accords with our conception of criminal sophistication. The interviewees were asked to estimate their usual take per job for six types of property offenses. If the offender had taken property rather than money, he was asked to estimate its value at what he had received in fencing it rather than its legitimate market value. In the case of drug sales, the offender was asked to estimate his usual profit rather than to give the gross sales value. We wanted to learn, first, whether crime was a lucrative way of life for these offenders and, second, whether the illegal profits increased during their careers.

Table 46 summarizes the respondents' reports of monetary gain from their offenses.

Generalizations do not readily emerge from these data. The offenses did not usually involve a large amount of money, but a small minority were reported to have been very remunerative. For example, about 10 percent of the robberies in the adult period were estimated to have produced $5000 or more in illicit gain; and 10 percent of the robberies and burglaries in the young adult period resulted in $1000 or more. The gain per crime in the juvenile period tended to be less than in later periods, as might be expected, but other trends pertaining to monetary gain over time are not apparent.

Using the medians of the usual take by offense type, together with the self-reported crime frequencies shown in Table 46, we calculate that our interviewees

Table 46

USUAL MONETARY GAIN PER OFFENSE—SAMPLE MEDIAN

	Juvenile Period		Young Adult Period		Adult Period		Entire Career
Offense	Usual Take ($)	Number of Offenses	Usual Take ($)	Number of Offenses	Usual Take ($)	Number of Offenses	Usual Take ($)
Purse snatching	20	19	37	4	—	—	23
Theft over $50	90	433	200	417	200	142	116
Burglary	100	1453	200	790	300	81	141
Robbery	500	8	300	374	400	512	359
Forgery/NSF	300	333	500	486	100	122	377
Drug sales	10	263	150	1754	1000	529	312

averaged, overall, about $250 in profit per offense.[73] The median take from a purse snatch was $30; grand theft, $116; burglary, $141; robbery, $359, forgery, $377; and drug sale, $312. Thus, the 10,500 offenses reported by the sample probably involved several million dollars in illicit income. But the average illicit income for these 49 offenders, over careers averaging about 20 years in length, was only a few thousand dollars per year.

REVIEW

In line with the hypotheses listed at the beginning of this section, we expected to find a growth in criminal sophistication as the criminal career progressed. Overall, however, the evidence given by the sample only weakly supports this widely held notion. These offenders employed few deliberate measures in planning and committing property crimes. Approximately half used none or little planning; only one-quarter used a significant amount.

Judging by our simple planning sophistication score, the sample as a whole slightly increased in sophistication over time. But the increase was not shown in a clear majority of individual offenders. Associations between planning sophistication and other offender attributes were not apparent. For instance, an offender who planned his crime did not necessarily commit a greater number of crimes (a finding that might be expected, given the generally low level of crime planning). It is also interesting that the average annual illicit income did not increase significantly as the criminal career developed. The average monetary gain from property crimes remained quite low throughout all career periods, $250 in profit per offense.

It might be argued that by interviewing offenders currently incarcerated, we were seeing only the "losers"—the incompetents who are frequently arrested. Yet there is nothing in the data to suggest that this proposition is true and several clues suggest that it is not. In intelligence and school attendance, the members of this sample fall well within the expected range for individuals of similar socioeconomic status.[74] Their success in avoiding arrest appears at least as good as the average offender, certainly no worse.[75] The types of crime and MOs pursued by our sample were also representative of the range of criminal activity that is reported to the police. The manner in which they were caught—patrol arrest or victim identification—was also typical.[76]

---

[73] The 1975 FBI *Uniform Crime Reports* estimate an average loss to the victim of $331 per robbery and $422 per burglary.

[74] See Sec. VI for a fuller discussion of socioeconomic factors.

There may be a few professional criminals who never come in contact with criminal justice agencies. We can only speculate that they exist, and since they are not arrested there is little the system can do to reduce their crimes. As for the habitual offenders who do come in contact with the system, judging by this sample, they have typically developed little sophistication. What criminal skills they have were learned early in their careers. Rather than pursuing crime as a strategy for increasing income, these offenders engaged in crime opportunistically and with a surprisingly low monetary gain.

[75] Average arrest probabilities can be inferred from the FBI's *Uniform Crime Reports* by calculating the ratio of arrests to reported offenses and then adjusting this figure for multiple offenders and underreporting. For instance, data from 300 city and county police agencies reveal a ratio of robbery arrests to reported robbery offenses of 0.39. See Peter W. Greenwood, Jan Chaiken, and Joan Petersilia, *The Criminal Investigation Process*, D. C. Heath, Lexington, Mass., 1977. A 50 percent reporting rate, as disclosed in recent victimization surveys, would cause us to reduce this figure by a factor of two, as would an observation that robberies are typically committed by two people. Using both these adjustment factors, the likelihood of arrest for an offender in any one robbery would be about 0.10. This is quite close to our sample average of 0.13.

[76] Greenwood, Chaiken, and Petersilia, *The Criminal Investigation Process*, p. 141.

VI. MOTIVATION AND SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

Preceding sections have described this felon sample with regard to their criminal activity and contacts with the criminal justice system. In either respect, these offenders demonstrated persistent criminal involvement over careers that spanned about 20 years on the average. The preceding sections suggested how significantly the crimes of habitual felons contribute to the general crime rate and how great a toll they exact on their communities. Why did their criminal careers continue, given the low financial gain and the repeated arrests and incarcerations? This section addresses the internal impulses and socioeconomic factors bearing on answers to this question.

Apart from isolating offenders from the community by means of imprisonment, criminal justice agencies attempt to alter the criminal behavior of offenders mainly by deterrence and rehabilitation. In simplest terms, the aim of deterrence is to decrease the attractiveness of criminal acts by the penalties that follow apprehension; if the penalties are severe enough, they are expected to outweigh the expected gains of crime. The aim of rehabilitation, on the other hand, is to open more constructive courses of action to the offender and to change his values so that crime is less desirable.

Recent empirical studies have not found evidence in the behavior of offenders that deterrence and rehabilitation efforts have been effective. As the offenders studied were heterogeneous groups, however, it has been urged that the effects of deterrence and rehabilitation efforts be more closely studied in individual offenders. It is believed that a key to the evaluation of deterrence and rehabilitation is a better understanding of the individual offender's decisionmaking process—how he assesses his alternative courses of action and decides to continue in crime.

Such research could be pursued by a variety of techniques, including psychological testing, controlled experimentation, and field observation. In our study we used a structured interview to elicit the offender's own perceptions of his motivations for crime and of the pattern of criminal activity that ensued. In this section we analyze the interview responses for the relevance of factors such as the offender's family background and education, his early delinquency, peer influences, drugs and alcohol involvement, and employment performance to the initiation and continuance of his criminal activity. The criminology literature makes clear that such factors are generally linked to juvenile and adult crime alike. For example, it has been repeatedly shown empirically that crime is more prevalent in the inner city and among people with lower incomes, from broken homes, and from geographically mobile groups. And delinquency is more likely to occur in neighborhoods where there is unsupervised gang or other peer-group activity.

SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

Family Background and Education

The effects of a broken home have been widely studied by sociologists and criminologists. Some researchers have found a high incidence of broken homes among delinquents, and they have concluded that a broken home is an important cause of delinquency. Eleanor and Sheldon Glueck, in their landmark study of 500 matched pairs of delinquents and nondelinquents, discovered that 60.4 percent of the former and 34.2 percent of the latter came from broken homes.[77] In our sample, 56 percent of the offenders reported that they came from a broken home and had lived with a single parent during adolescence.

While earlier studies have found that a majority of offenders come from low-income families, in our sample only 37 percent considered their families to be low-income. Fifty-seven percent characterized their families as having middle-class income, and 6 percent, upper-class.

As for the criminal involvement of other family members, only 6 percent of the interviewees reported that a parent had a felony conviction, but 42 percent of the 43 respondents with siblings reported that a sibling had been convicted of an adult felony. Furthermore, approximately 25 percent of the respondents said that a family member had been incarcerated during the respondent's adolescence.

Family changes of residence provide an indication of the stability of living conditions. Less than half the sample had moved more than once during their juvenile period. The mean number of family moves was 2.9, and 20 percent of the interviewees came from families who had moved five or more times before the offender reached the age of 18.

Prior studies have disclosed a correlation between the level of formal education attained and the propensity to commit serious crime. Seventy percent of our sample had completed at least eight years of schooling, but only three persons (6 percent) were high-school graduates. By comparison, the 1970 U.S. census showed that 74 percent of state-prison inmates nationwide had completed at least eight years of schooling and that 24 percent were high-school graduates.

Students who break school rules, especially those pertaining to attendance, are considered more likely to become delinquents than others.[78] When our sample was queried about school attendance, only 5 percent classified themselves as habitual truants, with half of the remainder reporting occasional absences and half, good attendance. Yet those who reported good attendance were not distinctive in other characteristics, even though good school attendance is usually regarded as a sign of nondelinquency. For example, half came from broken homes, half did not; family financial status was distributed as in the sample as a whole; their families moved about as much as did those of the entire sample; and, on the average, they left home at about the same age as the full sample. The one notable respect in which the good attenders differed was the average age at which they committed their first serious offense, 17.4, compared with 14.5 for the sample as a whole.

Early Delinquency

By their own reports, the sample began engaging in significant crime quite early: 29 percent by the age of 12, 75 percent by the age of 15, and over 90 percent by the age of 18. The mean (and median) age at which they reported their first serious offense was 14. The mean age at which they were first arrested, according to the rap sheets, was 15. Of the 41 respondents who engaged in crime before they were 18, 32 had served a juvenile incarceration. The first serious offense committed was preponderantly auto theft (48 percent of the reported crimes), followed by burglary (30 percent), theft over $50 (13.5 percent), and drug sales (2.7 percent).

---

[77] Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor T. Glueck, *Unravelling Juvenile Delinquency*, Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1950, Chap. 11.

[78] See especially William Healy and Augusta Bronner, *New Light on Delinquency and Its Treatment*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., 1936, p. 162.

By means of cross-tabulation, we attempted to relate differences in family background, intelligence-test scores, school attendance, and other factors to differences in the intensity and type of self-reported criminal activity. Significant associations were not apparent. And in comparing the development of these offenders and the general criminal population with regard to the factors above, we observed no striking contrasts, except possibly in the age at which serious criminal behavior began.

There may have been other factors present in the early development of our sample that would help explain the persistence of their criminal activity later. If so, our interviews failed to reveal them. We must therefore turn to a consideration of factors in their social development and lifestyle.

MOTIVATION FOR CRIME

The offenders in our sample were asked to single out from a list of reasons their main reason for committing crimes, and to indicate other contributing factors, in each of the three career periods. Their responses are summarized in Table 47.

In both parts of Table 47, the expressive needs show a sharp decline between the juvenile and adult periods, as the literature about social development leads one to expect. Whether this self-reported decline actually reflects personal development or is simply a playback of what the offender learned in counseling sessions, we are unable to ascertain. To the extent that the former is true, the results suggest that juvenile and adult offenders have different treatment needs.

By contrast, financial needs grew in importance as these offenders matured. This result suggests the need to consider economic assistance as a way of truncating criminal careers.

Table 47 confirms the widely held view that commitment to a hedonistic lifestyle prompts a substantial proportion of adult crimes. Whereas in the juvenile period, money for drugs and alcohol was not often cited as the main reason for committing crimes, in the later two periods about one-third of the respondents so cited it.

The response that being under the influence of drugs or alcohol contributed to one's crimes can be interpreted several ways. In some cases, that influence may have lowered the threshold for deciding to commit a crime; in others, it may have been a means of gaining courage or emotional control to execute crimes already decided on: in still others, being under the influence may have been a commonplace condition, and no special significance should be attached to its presence during the criminal act.

The crucial role that friends and gang activities play in early delinquency is underscored in these results. Twenty-one percent said peer influence was the main reason for their juvenile crimes, and 78 percent said it was a contributing factor.

Table 47

MAIN REASON FOR COMMITTING CRIMES AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

(%)

Response	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
Main Reason for Crimes			
	(N = 42)	(N = 43)	(N = 41)
Hostility, revenge	9.5	9.3	9.8
Thrills, attention, status	38.1	—	7.3
Peer influence	21.4	4.6	2.4
Expressive needs	69.0	13.9	19.5
Money for rent, self-support	19.0	27.9	22.0
Money for family support	—	11.6	9.8
Financial needs	19.0	39.5	31.8
Money for drugs, alcohol	9.5	30.2	29.3
Money for women	2.4	9.3	7.3
High living	11.9	39.5	36.6
No alternative/don't know	—	6.9	12.2
Contributing Factors			
	(N = 42)	(N = 48)	(N = 45)
Influence of friends	50.0	20.8	17.8
Gang activities	28.6	2.1	—
Expressive needs	78.6	22.9	17.8
Loss of employment	4.8	16.7	15.8
Heavy debts	—	6.3	11.1
Financial needs	4.8	23.0	26.9
Under the influence of alcohol or drugs	23.8	25.0	31.1
Marital or family difficulties	33.3	25.0	17.8
Other or not applicable	7.2[a]	20.9[a]	22.2[a]

[a] Column totals will exceed 100 percent since more than one factor could be chosen in each response.

The declining importance of marital or family difficulties as a contributing factor in the later career periods is noteworthy. It suggests that adults have better personal adjustment than young people, a finding that does not conflict with theory.

As another way of examining motivations for crime, we asked the interviewees how they used their illegally obtained money. The responses are shown in Table 48.

If we presume that the offenders who were motivated by expressive needs (hostility, revenge, thrills, status, peer influence), as well as those directly motivated by a craving for the high life, spent their crime gains on high living, we find a rough correspondence between Tables 47 and Table 48. Only a minority were moved by basic financial needs, particularly in the juvenile period.

Expressive needs appear to have been important in shaping the sample's criminal behavior. To illuminate their role further, we asked several related questions.

Table 48

USE OF MONEY GAINED FROM CRIMES
(%)

Use	Juvenile Period (N = 34)	Young Adult Period (N = 43)	Adult Period (N = 42)
High living	58.8	37.2	33.3
Drugs and drinking	11.8	30.2	23.8
High living (expressive needs)	70.6	67.4	57.1
Self-support	11.8	16.3	21.4
Family support	2.9	9.3	16.7
Debts	2.9	2.3	2.4
Financial needs	17.6	27.9	40.5
Other	11.8	4.6	2.4

As it has been repeatedly shown that crimes often occur as a result of peer-group or gang pressures, we asked:

> *Was your criminal behavior mostly influenced by your friends or the people you were going around with, or was it mostly just what you felt like doing?*

The distribution of responses is shown in Table 49.

Table 49

EXTENT OF PEER INFLUENCE
(%)

Primary Influence on Behavior	Juvenile Period (N = 42)	Young Adult Period (N = 46)	Adult Period (N = 41)
Self	54.8	80.0	87.8
Peer	42.9	20.0	12.2
Don't know	2.4	—	—

If self-reliance is a characteristic of emotional maturity, Table 49 clearly indicates that maturation was occurring in our sample of offenders. Moreover, as suggested by the high proportion of interviewees who said that they were self-directed in the two adult periods, this sample was not inclined to use scapegoats for their criminal acts. When we examined the period-to-period responses of the 35 persons who replied for all three periods, we observed that only 1 changed his response from self-directed to peer-directed between the juvenile and the two adult periods, while 14 shifted in the other direction.

The respondents were also asked to rate the importance to them of each of a list of lifestyle elements. Some of the elements reflected expressive or "high-times" needs: having money to spend, feeling excitement and kicks, having good-looking women, and having a good time. Others corresponded to more responsible concerns, for example, their family, having a steady job. The offender rated each as not important, somewhat unimportant, somewhat important, or very important. For analytical convenience, we assigned the responses scores of 1, 2 3, and 4, respectively. Table 50 shows the average percentage who rated the high-times elements and the steady-job and family elements. It also gives the mean score of all respondents for the high-times elements and for the steady-job/family elements.

Table 50

Relative Importance of Hgh-Times and Job/Family Lifestyle Elements

Rating	Juvenile Period (N = 36)	Young Adult Period (N = 30)	Adult Period (N = 24)
High-times elements[a]:			
Not important	11	12	21
Somewhat unimportant	5	13	10
Somewhat important	32	28	22
Very important	51	47	47
Mean importance score[b]	3.2	3.1	3.0
Steady job/family elements[c]:			
Not important	42	28	21
Somewhat unimportant	8	25	10
Somewhat important	12	30	22
Very important	28	16	47
Mean importance score[b]	2.1	2.3	3.0

[a] Entries are average percentage specifying the ratings shown, for the following elements: having money to spend, feeling excitement and kicks, having good-looking women, and having a good time.

[b] To calculate this score, the responses were assigned the following values: not important, 1; somewhat unimportant, 2; somewhat important, 3; and very important, 4.

[c] Entries are average percentage specifying the ratings shown, for the two elements listed.

Again we see evidence that expressive or high-times needs considerably influenced these offenders, though they tended to diminish in the adult period. Note that in the first two periods the mean importance score for high-times elements exceeded a value of 3 (somewhat important), compared with a score of about 2 (somewhat unimportant) for the job/family elements. Even in the adult period a substantial minority of these offenders did not attach much importance to the job/family elements.

A central question is, of course, whether the degree of criminality is related to aspects of criminal motivation. To consider this issue in simplest terms, we return to the grouping of offenders shown in Table 47 and tabulate the overall offense rates for each group as a whole in each career period (see Table 51).

The salient pattern in Table 51 is the steep reduction in the offense rate of the financial-needs group over time, compared with the relatively stable rates of the

Table 51

OFFENSE RATE RELATED TO CRIME MOTIVATION

Motivational Group[a]	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
Expressive needs	3.5	5.2	4.3
Financial needs	19.5	5.0	0.6
High living	2.5	4.0	1.0

NOTE: The entries are the number of offenses committed by that group during the specified period divided by the total number of months of street time for all individuals in that group in the period.

[a] According to main reason for crimes given in Table 47.

other two groups. (If a similar comparison is made of median offense rates, which dampen the influence of a few extreme individuals, the rates of both the financial-needs and the expressive-needs groups diminish over time.) The juvenile rate for the financial needs group is strikingly high, but this group contains only eight individuals (see Table 47), so its offense rate should be viewed with caution.

We now move from crime motivation per se to two related matters, drugs and alcohol involvement and employment performance.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL INVOLVEMENT

It has long been pointed out that involvement with drugs[79] and alcohol significantly affects criminal activity. However, specialists disagree about the extent and importance of the criminal roles of drugs and alcohol, largely because of the inadequacy of data on the causal relationship between street crime and the use of these substances.

Drugs and alcohol can be viewed as causes of crime, both in a broad and a narrow sense. Undoubtedly some crimes would not be committed in the absence of drug and alcohol use. More narrowly, various acts connected with the production, distribution, and use of drugs are unlawful in themselves.

Drugs and alcohol can be viewed as motivations for crime. There is substantial empirical evidence that many crimes, especially burglaries and thefts, result from the need to support an addiction. "The image of the 'dope fiend' who was driven to commit any type of crime so that he could purchase the drug in order to stave off the horrors of withdrawal developed into a fixed part of our culture."[80]

Drugs and alcohol can also be viewed as triggering factors or stimuli for crime. They may help one overcome the mental barriers to unlawful conduct; they also override the physical stress that might otherwise deter criminal acts. They may lower the threshold of violence (although some drug types raise it).[81]

---

[79] For simplicity, we use the term "drugs" to encompass narcotics, dangerous drugs, and controlled substances in general.

[80] S. W. Greenberg and F. Adler, "Crime and Addiction: An Empirical Analysis of the Literature, 1920-1973," *Contemporary Drug Problems*, Vol. 3, Summer 1974, p. 221.

[81] Aggravated assaults, for example, are often precipitated by the intoxication of both the assaulter and the victim. See L. A. Curtis, *Violence, Race and Culture*, D. C. Heath and Co., Lexington, Mass., 1975, p. 65.

Finally, drugs and alcohol can be viewed as elements of a crime culture or milieu that promotes unlawful conduct as a lifestyle and means of subsistence.

When research findings disagree on the criminal role of drugs and alcohol, it is often because of different emphases among these views. In any case, the state of knowledge about this role is inconclusive.[82]

Interview Response Data

In the interview instrument we posed various questions to reveal the use of drugs and alcohol as a correlate of criminal activity and as a condition within criminal careers. We refer to this as "involvement with drugs and alcohol." The term "involvement" does not distinguish among addiction, dependence, or more voluntary and irregular use. And while our interviews produced information about the incidence of drug selling in this sample of offenders, we were not concerned with the illegal supply and possession of drugs and alcohol per se. We were interested in the nature and extent of drugs and alcohol involvement in the careers of the interviewees.

California Department of Corrections records classified 43 percent of our sample as addicted to or users of narcotics or dangerous drugs. In Table 47 we saw that 30 percent of the sample reported that the main reason for their adult crime was to obtain money for drugs and alcohol (but only 10 percent in the juvenile period). And approximately one-quarter said that being under the influence of drugs or alcohol contributed to their committing crimes. Table 48 showed that a moderate number (12 percent in the juvenile period, 30 percent in the young adult, and 24 percent in the adult) spent their criminal profit primarily on drugs and alcohol.

We asked the interviewees whether they had been under the influence of alcohol or drugs when committing crimes. Table 52 presents the responses.

In observing that 40 to 60 percent of the respondents said that they were under the influence of alcohol or drugs or both while committing crimes, we should recall that 24 to 31 percent thought that being under the influence contributed to their crimes (Table 47). Thus, about half of those under the influence during their criminal acts apparently believed that this condition was simply incidental rather than contributive.

Is it unusual that 40 to 60 percent of this sample were under the influence of drugs or alcohol? In a recent sample survey of 191,400 inmates in state correctional institutions, it was estimated that at the time of their current offense 43 percent had been drinking (30 percent moderately or heavily), and that 26 percent were under the influence of drugs.[83] Earlier studies varied widely in their estimates of drugs/alcohol involvement during criminal acts. More often than not, these studies did not estimate the proportion of drug-influenced crimes but rather the likelihood that the offender was an addict or user. For example, the Violence Commission's

---

[82] See the U.S. *Congressional Record*, September 30, 1976, pp. 517321-24, for testimony about a review conducted by the Panel on Drug Use and Criminal Behavior convened by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The review has been published in Research Triangle Institute, "Drug Use and Crime," *Report of the Panel on Drug Use and Criminal Behavior*, prepared for the National Institute on Drug Abuse, September 1976.

[83] U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, National Criminal Justice Information and Statistics Service, *Survey of Inmates of State Correctional Facilities, 1974, Advance Report*, National Prisoner Statistics Special Report SD-NPS-SR-2, March 1976; hereinafter cited as LEAA, *Survey of Inmates*.

Table 52

INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL DURING CRIMINAL ACTS
(%)

Influence	Juvenile Period (N = 40)	Young Adult Period (N = 44)	Adult Period (N = 42)
Alcohol	25.0	29.6	26.2
Drugs	10.0	20.5	23.8
Both drugs and alcohol	2.5	9.1	9.5
Neither alcohol nor drugs	62.5	40.9	40.5

Task Force on Individual Acts of Violence cited the findings of a 1967 New York City study that "41% of those arrested for burglary were admitted users" and that the rates were similarly high for other property offenses.[84] Wolcott concluded that drugs and alcohol provided a stimulus or played a significant role for 71 percent of the offenders studied who committed spur-of-the-moment robberies. Of those who planned their robberies, he found 44 percent to have been under the influence of drugs or alcohol.[85]

Finally, we asked the interviewees to assess the importance of drugs and alcohol in their criminal careers:

> *Do you think that their use had anything to do with your committing these crimes or not?*

The responses are shown in Table 53.

We observe that nearly half answered "some" or "a lot" in the juvenile period, and nearly two-thirds responded similarly in the two adult periods.

Classification of the Sample by Career-long Drugs and Alcohol Involvement

After examining each interviewee's responses to the foregoing questions, plus the narcotics-history designation[86] on his rap sheet, we classified the sample into four groups, as follows:

	Number (% of Sample)
Drugs-involved	12 (24.5)
Alcohol-involved	14 (28.6)
Involved with both	9 (18.4)
Involved with neither	14 (28.6)

---

[84] Reported in A. Sagalyn, *The Crime of Robbery in the United States: An Assessment of Studies and Related Data from 1965-1970*, Background Paper ICR 71-1, Arthur D. Little, Inc., January 1971, p. 15.

[85] G. D. Wolcott, "A Typology of Armed Robbers," cited in Sagalyn, *The Crime of Robbery*, p. 16.

[86] The narcotics-history designation was one of the following: no narcotics history, heroin addict, heroin user, other opiate addict, other opiate user, marijuana user, or dangerous drug user. Several offenders in the sample who were designated as having no narcotics history gave responses indicative of drug involvement in our interviews.

Table 53

INFLUENCE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL INVOLVEMENT ON CRIMINAL CAREER
(%)

Influence	Juvenile Period (N = 24)	Young Adult Period (N = 34)	Adult Period (N = 31)
None	50.0	32.4	29.1
A little	4.2	2.9	3.0
	(57)	(43)	(41)
Some	33.3	23.5	9.7
A lot	12.5	41.2	58.1
	(43)	(57)	(59)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses are totals adjusted for the considerable nonresponse rate, using the career-long classification scheme shown below.

The first three classes denote significant involvement at some stage of the criminal career, which we term career involvement. We attempted to make a period-by-period classification, but the results were unsatisfactory because too many responses were missing or inconsistent. The assignment of individual offenders to one of these classes on the basis of the information available was quite clear in most cases.

We shall use this classification primarily in examining the associations of drugs and alcohol involvement with other aspects of criminal careers.

Drugs and Alcohol Involvement Related to Other Aspects of Criminal Careers

Does the Drug/Alcohol User Commit Certain Types of Crimes More Than Other Offenders? Table 54 displays the frequency distributions of reported crimes by offenders in the various drugs/alcohol involvement classes. Overall, the data fail to suggest a simple association between drugs and alcohol involvement and preferences among offenses. The strongest association shown is a tendency for the alcohol-involved offenders to commit a smaller percentage of robberies and a higher percentage of forgeries.

Does the Drug/Alcohol User Commit Crimes More Often Than Other Offenders? We cross-tabulated statistics pertaining to respondents' offense rates (number of crimes committed per month of street time) against the four classes of drugs and alcohol involvement, period by period (see Table 55). The purpose was to examine the association of the sample's rate of criminal activity with the involvement factor.

We see that the offense-rate medians had a consistent relationship over the three career periods (with one exception): the alcohol-involved had the lowest offense rate, and those involved with both alcohol and drugs had the highest offense rate. The full relationship may be depicted as follows:

Alcohol-involved < neither < drugs-involved < both.

Table 54

DRUGS/ALCOHOL INVOLVEMENT RELATED TO TYPE OF OFFENSE

Offense	Drugs-Involved (N = 12)	Alcohol-Involved (N = 14)	Drugs- and Alcohol-Involved (N = 9)	Neither Drugs- nor Alcohol-Involved (N = 14)
Juvenile Period				
Auto theft	30	42	32	6
Purse snatching	—	—	1	—
Theft over $50	10	2	11	9
Burglary	33	30	33	29
Robbery	—	1	1	—
Aggravated assault	1	16	2	2
Forgery/NSF	16	10	—	1
Drug sales	11	—	21	52
Rape	—	—	—	—
Young Adult Period				
Auto theft	3	2	5	24
Purse snatching	—	—	1	—
Theft over $50	25	1	14	2
Burglary	19	60	24	5
Robbery	14	6	12	6
Aggravated assault	—	—	—	—
Forgery/NSF	11	31	9	8
Drug sales	27	—	36	53
Rape	—	—	—	—
Adult Period				
Auto theft	4	—	2	3
Purse snatching	—	—	1	—
Theft over $50	26	1	7	4
Burglary	1	—	8	10
Robbery	33	20	31	29
Aggravated assault	14	9	—	1
Forgery/NSF	14	38	—	—
Drug sales	9	32	53	53
Rape	—	—	—	—

At the same time, the rate statistics varied widely within each involvement class, with the result that the means do not possess the regularity shown by the medians.

We conclude as follows:

- An individual offender's drugs/alcohol-involvement class was poorly predictive of his offense rate.
- Offenders involved with both drugs and alcohol tended to be the most active in crime overall, and offenders involved with alcohol alone tended to be the least active, irrespective of career period.
- The juvenile period was generally the most active for all involvement classes.

Table 55

DRUGS/ALCOHOL INVOLVEMENT RELATED TO OFFENSE RATE

Offense Rate Statistics	Drugs-Involved	Alcohol-Involved	Involved with Both	Involved with Neither
	(N = 11)	(N = 10)	(N = 8)	(N = 10)
Median	1.33	0.75	1.75	0.92
Mean	3.05	2.51	2.65	12.40
Maximum	10.71	16.67	7.64	76.67
Young Adult Period				
	(N = 12)	(N = 14)	(N = 9)	(N = 13)
Median	0.90	0.32	1.52	0.64
Mean	3.94	0.47	7.11	3.22
Maximum	30.60	1.29	40.20	23.53
Adult Period				
	(N = 12)	(N = 13)	(N = 9)	(N = 12)
Median	0.83	0.11	0.62	0.22
Mean	1.36	2.00	1.39	4.32
Maximum	4.55	16.67	6.50	5.43

NOTE: Entries are the number of crimes of all types committed per month of street time in the period shown.

Does the Drug/Alcohol User Commit More Crimes against Persons Than Other Offenders? The number of crimes against persons an offender commits in his young adult and adult periods can be regarded as a simple measure of his dangerousness to the community. We examined the distribution of this measure for each of the four drugs/alcohol involvement classes. For brevity, only the medians are shown below:

	Median Number of Crimes against Persons, Young Adult and Adult Periods
Alcohol-involved	3.5
Involved with neither	9.0
Drugs-involved	12.5
Involved with both	20.0

Not surprisingly, the relative magnitudes of these medians correspond to those shown for the offense rates in Table 55. Those involved with drugs alone and those involved with both alcohol and drugs committed more crimes against persons that did those in the other involvement classes.

Is the Drug/Alcohol User More Likely to Be Arrested, Convicted, and Incarcerated Than Other Offenders? The effect of drugs and alcohol on an offender's contacts with the criminal justice system has been debated in the literature.[87] A reasonable hypothesis is that the offender who is involved with drugs or alcohol may be more careless and desperate, thus exposing himself more than a nonuser to arrest, conviction, and incarceration. We examined interview responses and the respondents' rap sheets for evidence on this issue. Table 56 shows the justice-system contacts, relative to the amount of criminal activity, of the four drugs/alcohol involvement classes.

---

[87] See the *Congressional Record*, September 30, 1976.

These data do not generally support a view that drugs and alcohol involvement decisively affects the likelihood of arrest, conviction, and incarceration. Nevertheless, for our sample there is once again an indication that the offenders who were alcohol- involved but not drugs-involved were different from the other three classes. Here it is shown in their higher propensity for being arrested (and to a lesser degree, convicted) relative to the number of crimes committed.

Table 56

DRUGS/ALCOHOL INVOLVEMENT RELATED TO CONTACTS WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

	Number of Offenses Committed[a]	Percent of Offenses Resulting in Arrest	Convictions per Arrest	Incarcerations per Conviction
Drugs-involved (N = 11)	2,922	2.9	0.69	0.88
Alcohol-involved (N = 14)	999	12.1	0.74	0.86
Involved with both (N = 9)	1,899	3.3	0.61	0.68
Involved with neither (N = 13)	4,210	2.1	0.69	0.87
All (N = 47)	10,030	3.5	0.69	0.84

[a] Of the nine offense types: rape, aggravated assault, robbery, purse snatching, burglary, auto theft, theft over $50, forgery/NSF, drug sales.

EMPLOYMENT PERFORMANCE

It is widely believed that unemployment and criminal activity are associated. One study found that "over 90 percent of the men released from prison initially seek legitimate employment and try to achieve self-sufficiency without engaging in crime. Those who later revert to crime apparently do so largely because they have difficulty in procuring adequate noncriminal employment, because they have inadequate economic resources at release, and because they continue social contacts with persons of criminal background."[88] Another study concluded that the "recidivism of adult male offenders . . . varies inversely with their postrelease employment. The chief barrier to employment is not the inmate's criminal record, but rather his lack of extensive or skilled work experience."[89]

Our study sought to reveal patterns of employment in the careers of this sample of habitual offenders and to disclose the relationships between their employment and criminal activity.

---

[88] Daniel, Glaser, *The Effectiveness of a Prison and Parole System*, The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., Indianapolis, Ind., 1969, p. 332.

[89] R. Knudten, *Crime in a Complex Society*, The Dorsey Press, Homewood, Ill., 1970, p. 679.

General Picture

A set of five questions was asked to outline the general picture of employment performance among our sample of offenders. The five parts of Table 57 present the distribution of responses.

These data reveal that the employment performance of the interviewees was uneven and generally weak. About half claimed that legitimate employment had been their usual source of income. Blue-collar work and odd jobs predominated; lack of job skills was a notable difficulty in the juvenile period. Most who worked

Table 57

ASPECTS OF EMPLOYMENT PERFORMANCE
(%)

Response	Juvenile Period (N = 49)	Young Adult Period (N = 45)	Adult Period (N = 46)
Usual Source of Income			
A job	46.9	60.0	50.0
Welfare	2.0	—	6.5
Spouse's, relative's, or friend's income	38.8	8.9	2.2
Illegal activities	12.2	28.9	34.8
Workmen's compensation, social security, or disability benefits	—	2.2	6.5
Type of Job Held			
Odd jobs	56.3	17.7	18.8
Business	9.4	14.7	15.6
Trade	3.1	29.4	37.5
Factory	6.2	17.7	9.4
Restaurant/bar	3.1	—	3.1
Sales	3.1	8.8	3.1
Construction	6.3	2.9	3.1
Military	9.4	5.9	—
Self-employed	—	2.9	6.3
Other	3.1	—	3.1
Degree of Employment			
Part-time	44.1	11.4	6.1
Full-time	32.3	77.1	75.8
Off and on	23.5	11.4	18.2
Earnings per Week While Working ($)			
Less than 50	40.9	14.8	—
51-100	50.0	29.6	17.4
101-200	9.1	40.1	34.8
201-300	—	11.1	30.4
More than 300	—	3.7	17.4
Percent of Period Employed at Job			
Less than 25	30.0	6.5	6.7
25-49	23.3	16.1	6.7
50-74	13.3	12.9	10.0
75-100	33.3	61.3	76.7

were employed over most of a career period, and, when working, a large majority devoted full time to their legitimate jobs. On the other hand, compensation for legitimate work tended to be relatively low. Of the juvenile workers, nearly half earned less than $50 per week, and most of the rest earned under $100 per week; in the young adult period only about 15 percent of the employed earned over $200 per week, and nearly half earned less than $100 per week; and in the adult period about half earned less than $200 per week. So, even among the half of our sample who showed a fairly sustained commitment to legitimate employment, most had earnings that were not much above a poverty level.

Perhaps 10 percent of the sample might be characterized as having an antiemployment history; that is, their responses contained no clear indication that they had ever had an interest in legitimate employment. Another 30 to 40 percent had poor employment performance, for reasons that are unclear; a lack of skills, the absence of opportunities, and weak motivation may have been responsible.[90]

For analytical purposes, we applied arbitrary criteria to distinguish "better" performers on the job. An offender who had worked at least 75 percent of his street time at a legitimate job and who earned more than $50 per week in the juvenile period or more than $100 per week in the young adult or adult period was classified as being better-employed in the specified period. In the juvenile period, 7 offenders (16.7 percent) met these criteria of better employment performance; in the young adult period, 13 (27.0 percent); and in the adult period, 20 (43.5 percent). Those who failed to meet these criteria (as well as some who did meet them) could be said to have had strong economic pressure to obtain income by illegitimate means.

Postrelease Reemployment

There is a basic conflict between those, especially correctional administrators, who believe that incarceration, with its deterrent and rehabilitative effects, prepares and encourages an inmate to find employment after release, and those who believe that incarceration has a net negative effect on reemployment, both because a criminal record itself severely handicaps the releasee and because his criminal skills and associations are reinforced in prison. But there is no disagreement that postrelease reemployment is an important factor in the crime problem.

Our interest in the offender's employment after prison release encompassed not only his ability to find employment but also his desire to rely on legitimate employment as his source of income. This desire can be regarded as an indicator of the offender's long-term commitment to a criminal lifestyle.

Table 58 displays the frequency distribution of responses to the two questions we asked about employment search after release from the two earlier landmark incarcerations.

The responses show an expected consistency: the proportion of offenders in each period who required 4 months or more to find work numbered about the same as the proportion who said they were not at all serious about looking for work. On the face of it, these results suggest that ex-convicts can find employment if they

---

[90] Grossly, this employment profile resembles the one reported in the recent LEAA-funded survey of inmates of state correctional facilities. It estimated that, of the 31 percent of the inmates who had been unemployed immediately before their present incarceration, 14 percent had not wanted to work; and nearly all of the 69 percent who had been employed had worked full-time. *Survey of Inmates*, Table 1, p. 24.

113

Table 58

POSTRELEASE EMPLOYMENT SEARCH
(%)

Response	Juvenile Period (N = 42)	Young Adult Period (N = 48)
Seriousness of Job Search		
Very serious	40.0	38.2
Somewhat serious	8.0	23.5
Not very serious	16.0	17.7
Not at all serious	36.0	20.6
Time Required to Find Work (weeks)		
Less than 1	10	33
1-4	10	4
5-16	50	42
More than 16	12	8
Failed to find work	18	13

seriously look for it, but it may take several months. The data do not support the notion that as offenders advance in criminal careers they lose interest in obtaining legitimate employment. The second part of Table 58, comparing the juvenile with the young adult data, shows that a heavier record did not seem to lengthen the time needed to obtain a postrelease job.

Loss of Employment

The plausible assumption that loss of employment causes some people to turn to crime prompted us to ask the interviewees whether loss of employment contributed to the crimes they committed during the six months before their landmark incarcerations. Affirmative responses came from 4.8 percent of the interviewees for the juvenile period, 16.7 percent for the young adult, and 15.6 percent for the adult. In one sense, these relatively low percentages seem reasonable: given that good employment was uncommon among the interviewees, loss of employment would not be expected to be an important stimulus to crime. Some exceptions were found, however. In the words of one offender:

> I went broke when I was 32. I was making $4000-5000 a year—a bare living, nothing spectacular. Up to that time, there was something inside me that was growing. . . . At the age of 32 it came out, and I was angry. After I went broke, I started to look for another job, and I couldn't get anything. Anything! I started to get angry, and I happened to be over in Yuma, Arizona, where they have a nice collection of guns, and it doesn't require anything to buy one. You can just sign Joe Blow in a little book and buy anything you want. So, I bought that gun. At the time that I bought it, I was thinking that if things didn't improve pretty damn quick, I'm going to make a break. There was almost a year after I bought the gun before I robbed a bank. I was still playing horses but making smaller bets out of necessity. I was making a few bucks, but not enough. I was going broke slowly. I decided that this was it. By this time—whether it is rationalization or looking for an excuse to ease my conscience pangs or whatever—I really never had any

guilt feelings about robbing banks, probably because of my situation. And I never got high over it. I just accepted it as a way of life. There was a neat old bank in Silver Spring, Maryland, and it was just crying to be robbed, and so it was my first bank robbery, and incidentally, the one I got the most money out of.

Employment Performance Related to Other Aspects of Criminal Careers

Does the Better-Employed Offender Commit Crimes Less Often Than Other Offenders? Table 59 depicts the relation of the offenders' median offense rate and employment performance. (The juvenile period is omitted because of the sparseness of data.) The other offenders show a markedly higher offense rate than the better-employed.

Table 59

EMPLOYMENT PERFORMANCE RELATED TO OFFENSE RATE

	Median Number of Crimes Committed/Month of Street Time	
	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
Better-employed	0.31 (N = 13)	0.12 (N = 20)
Others	0.96 (N = 35)	0.71 (N = 29)

Does the Better-Employed Offender Commit Fewer Crimes against Persons Than Other Offenders? Table 60 examines the records of both employment groups for a possible correlation with our rough measure of dangerousness to society. The results suggest that the better-employed offenders were less serious criminals than the others as their careers advanced.

Table 60

EMPLOYMENT PERFORMANCE RELATED TO CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS

	Median Number of Crimes Committed against Persons		
	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
Better-employed	8 (N = 7)	7 (N = 13)	4 (N = 20)
Others	8 (N = 42)	11 (N = 36)	15 (N = 29)

Does the Better-Employed Offender Have More Crime-Free Intervals Than Other Offenders? One would expect so. The data (see Table 61) suggest, however, that better-employed offenders were neither overrepresented nor under-represented among those with crime-free intervals; therefore, no significant association was found.

Table 61

EMPLOYMENT PERFORMANCE RELATED TO CRIME-FREE INTERVALS

	Percent of Better-Employed		
	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
Entire sample	14.3 (N = 49)	28.9 (N = 45)	43.5 (N = 46)
Respondents with crime-free intervals	17.6 (N = 17)	30.0 (N = 20)	40.0 (N = 25)

Is the Better-Employed Offender Less Involved in Drugs and Alcohol? Table 62 cross-tabulates the data bearing on this question. Note that there is a higher percentage of better-employed among the alcohol-involved than among any other involvement class. The lowest percentage of better-employed is found among those involved with both drugs and alcohol.

Table 62

EMPLOYMENT PERFORMANCE RELATED TO DRUGS/ALCOHOL INVOLVEMENT (%)

		Better-Employed		
Drugs/Alcohol Involvement	Entire Sample (N = 49)	Juvenile Period (N = 7)	Young Adult Period (N = 13)	Adult Period (N = 20)
Drugs-involved	24.5	14.3	30.8	25.0
Alcohol-involved	28.6	57.1	38.5	35.0
Involved with both	18.4	14.3	7.7	5.0
Involved with neither	28.6	14.3	23.1	35.0

REVIEW

The information obtained from these offenders about their family background, school attendance, educational level, and early delinquency did not distinguish them from the wider population of offenders in respect to juvenile development. But one exception is noteworthy: our sample committed their first serious offense at a relatively early age on the average.

During the juvenile period, this sample was preponderantly motivated by expressive needs rather than financial needs or the desire for high living. But in the two adult periods, financial needs and the desire for high living outweighed expressive needs as motivation for crime. In particular, peer-directed behavior was prominent in the juvenile period, as might be expected, but became insignificant in the adult periods compared with self-directed behavior.

Over two-thirds of the sample appeared to have significant drugs or alcohol involvement or both during their criminal careers (roughly 25 percent, drugs alone; 30 percent, alcohol alone; and 20 percent, both). About 45 percent in the juvenile period and 65-70 percent in the adult periods believed that drugs and alcohol involvement was of considerable importance to their criminal activity. About 40-60 percent were under the influence of drugs or alcohol while committing crimes, but approximately half of these offenders felt that this was an incidental condition rather than a contributing factor. About 30 percent reported that as adults their main reason for criminal activity was to obtain money for drugs and alcohol, but only 10 percent reported this as the main reason for their juvenile crimes.

We did not generally find clear associations between drugs and alcohol involvement, on the one hand, and preferences in crimes, offense rate, or contacts with the criminal justice system, on the other. The offenders involved only with alcohol tended to be exceptional, however. They committed crimes less often than other offenders, and the crimes they did commit were usually less serious ones. There was some evidence that those involved with both drugs and alcohol were the most serious offenders.

The employment performance of the sample was uneven and generally weak. About half depended on legitimate employment as their usual source of income, but their earnings tended to be relatively low. About 10 percent of the sample seemed to have little or no interest in a regular job throughout their entire career. The proportion who required a long time to find work after release (say, four months or more) or who failed to find work was about 30 percent after the juvenile landmark release and about 20 percent after the young-adult landmark release. (These percentages roughly coincided with the percentages reporting that they were not at all serious about looking for work after release.) Only a small minority of the sample thought that losing employment had contributed to their criminal activity.

We found that the "better-employed" offenders in our sample, compared with the others, tended to be less active in overall adult crime; were inclined to commit fewer adult crimes against persons; were unexceptional in experiencing crime-free intervals; and were more likely to be alcohol-involved and less likely to be both drugs- and alcohol-involved. This finding suggests that although being employed did not halt these offenders' criminal activities, it may have disposed them to less serious and less frequent crimes. The crime level might be reduced by improving the legitimate employment opportunities of these offenders. Generally, however, the hypothesis that employment performance declines as criminal careers continue was not borne out by our data.

Despite the unfavorable circumstances that frequently confronted these offenders, undoubtedly they had some control over employment performance, drugs and alcohol involvement, and a taste for high living. They demonstrated that it was more expedient for them to continue their criminal activity than to change other aspects of their lifestyle.

VII. VIOLENT ASPECTS OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Among the hypotheses that have been advanced about the role of violence in the careers of habitual offenders are the following: Actual violence (as opposed to threatened violence) against victims occurs more often in the earlier phases of criminal careers. As careers progress, offenders are not only less likely to injure victims but also less inclined to commit crimes in which actual violence is an essential element (e.g., aggravated assault). Furthermore, violence in personal life also tends to decline with the passage of years.

These hypotheses shaped the violence-related questions that were asked in the interviews. Our queries addressed the frequency and degree of violence in the interviewees' crimes, the reasons for its arising, the potential for violence if not actually committed, and its presence in their personal lives.

VIOLENCE TOWARD VICTIMS

The interviewees were asked:

> *Were any of your victims injured in the crimes you committed during this period? If yes, were they injured seriously or slightly? If no, would you have injured them to complete the crime or in self-defense, or would you not have injured them for any reason?*

Their responses are tabulated in Table 63.

The steady and relatively low proportion of offenders causing injury to victims is notable. At the same time, we recall that crimes against persons were committed by only 17 of the 42 interviewees who committed crimes in the juvenile period (41 percent); by 30 of the 48 in the young adult period (63 percent); and by all but one of the 46 in the adult period (98 percent). Thus, about 50 percent of the offenders who committed personal crimes in the juvenile period, 25 percent in the young adult period, and 20 percent in the adult period injured their victims.

The responses suggest that the proportion of victims who were seriously rather than slightly injured decreased in the adult period. The responses also indicate a weak downward trend in the proportion who felt they would not have injured a victim in any circumstances. To the extent that these statements of attitudes (rather than descriptions of past acts) are reliable, they counter the hypothesis that victims have less risk of injury from older, more experienced offenders.

In the young adult career period, about half the interviewees were active robbers. We wondered whether they differed from the other half who were not robbers in injuring victims. An examination of the individual responses showed that, of the 25 robbers:

5 (20%) injured at least one victim
17 (68%) caused no injury
3 (12%) failed to respond.

Table 63

USE OF VIOLENCE IN CRIMES
(%)

Response	Juvenile Period (N = 39)		Young Adult Period (N = 42)		Adult Period (N = 43)	
Yes, injured victims		20.5		19.1		20.9
Seriously	75.0		85.7		44.4	
Slightly	25.0		14.3		55.6	
No, did not injure victims		79.5		81.9		79.1
Would have injured them:						
To complete the crime	18.2		25.0		29.2	
In self-defense	27.3		29.2		33.3	
Would not have injured them for any reason	54.5		45.8		37.5	

Among the 24 who committed no robberies:

3 (12%) injured at least one victim
17 (71%) caused no injury
4 (17%) failed to respond.

There is thus no clear indication that these robbers were more prone to injure their victims. These results are consistent with findings in the literature that only in 10-25 percent of robberies are victims injured more than slightly.[91]

The interviewees differed widely in their willingness and propensity to use force to complete a crime. At one extreme were those who stated emphatically that they would not hesitate to kill the victim if it became necessary:

> There is no doubt in my mind that I would have killed any victim who tried to cross me. You have to understand, I was fighting a full-fledged war against "them." "Them" was anyone—the establishment, whites, police, anyone. I did seriously hurt a couple of victims and I actually felt pretty good about it. I thought I was getting back at "them." At times I thought I might be winning the war. They would do something to me and I'd do something back. It was kind of a game. You see I wanted to make "them" pay for all the shit I had to put up with. Oh yeah, there is no doubt that, especially in my earlier years, I was out to bust some heads—all you had to do was get in my way just a little bit.

As could be expected, "accidents" sometimes happened, and an offender would injure his victim without having had any intention of doing so.

> There was one where I really hurt this guy, and it was an accident. This was actually my second robbery, and nothing came from it—no money. This one was a theater, and I went in, bought a ticket, and sat in a certain place. When things looked cool and the movie ended, I was supposed to go down behind the curtain and later, when everyone but the manager was gone, get

---

[91] The empirical data are concisely reviewed in Sagalyn, *The Crime of Robbery in the United States*, pp. 8-9.

> him to open the safe. That was the plan. Well, I thought I needed a disguise. I used a motorcycle helmet and goggles and a red bandana. So I went down in this theater basement and I heard this guy coming. It was pitch dark. It turned out that the room I stepped in was the room where he changed clothes. So he comes in and turns the lights on. He just started to take his trousers off, when he looked up and saw me. I just don't know how he did it with his pants down and all, but he leaped across the room and on top of me. He was terrified, and in the scuffle my motorcycle helmet got turned around so that I couldn't see, and I panicked, trying to beat him off me. And the funny thing was, I never thought to shoot him. It never occurred to me. I really did whale him, though, and it panicked me so much that I thought I might have killed him or something. As soon as it was over, I split. It turned out that I hadn't hurt him all that bad, but his description in the newspaper sort of sounded like a monster from Mars or something had attacked him. It kind of taught me a lesson, though. I learned that you need to control the situation.

VIOLENCE IN PERSONAL LIFE

We examined the incidence of personal violence over the interviewees' careers (1) to estimate the extent to which these offenders matured, and (2) to gauge the relationship between personal violence and criminal violence. If a strong relationship exists, further research may reveal that personal violence is a useful predictor of dangerousness to society.

For each career period we asked the interviewees about the frequency and seriousness of violence in their personal lives. The responses are given in Table 64.

The trend in all the responses is a slackening of the amount of violence in personal life over time, though not necessarily a slackening in its intensity (in occurrence of injury). The reasons for losing one's temper appeared to equalize over time. While cheating by crime partners and unfaithful girlfriends were prominent causes in the juvenile period, there were no dominant causes in later periods. Similarly, the type of antagonist in fights equalized at the same time the number of personal fights declined.[92] Friends or strangers were by far the most common opponents in the juvenile period, but in later periods the type of opponent became more evenly distributed.

On balance, even though fights in later periods (while occurring less often) were more likely to result in injury, the picture of personal violence presented by our sample is consistent with the hypothesis that offenders become more restrained as they mature.

INTERACTION BETWEEN PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL VIOLENCE

To what extent does a propensity toward violence in personal life lead to violence in crimes? To address this question, we proceeded as follows. There were 147 possible combinations of interviewees and career periods (49 × 3). Some of

---

[92] Among those responding, the median number of fights per offender was 5 in the juvenile period, 4 in the young adult, and 0 in the adult.

Table 64

VIOLENCE IN PERSONAL LIFE
(%)

Response	Juvenile Period (N = 42)	Young Adult Period (N = 47)	Adult Period (N = 44)
Reason for Losing Temper			
Hassling by the police	19.1	17.0	13.6
Cheating by a crime partner	38.1	34.0	18.2
Insults by a stranger	45.2	36.2	22.7
Girlfriend's running around	23.8	23.4	13.6
Other	7.1	2.1	9.1
Frequency of Seriously Losing Temper			
Never	38.7	40.6	51.6
Sometimes	38.7	34.4	35.5
Often	22.6	25.0	12.9
Number of Fights			
None	12.9	37.1	54.6
1-2	16.2	14.3	21.2
3-10	38.7	25.9	12.1
More than 10	32.3	22.9	12.1
Number of Fights Involving a Weapon			
None	41	46	50
1-2	18	21	22
More than 2	41	33	28
Opponents in Fights			
Family	2.8	10.0	14.3
Friends	38.9	20.0	23.8
Crime partners	13.8	20.0	14.3
Strangers	38.9	43.3	28.6
Police	2.8	3.3	14.3
Others	2.8	3.3	4.8
Respondents injured in fights	33.3	40.9	46.1
Opponents injured in fights	59.3	54.6	71.4

these combinations involved serious injury to victims; some, slight injury; and the remainder, no injury. Table 65 associates with these three combinations several measures derived from Table 64: mean loss of temper, median number of fights per period, and median number of fights with a weapon per period.

The evidence strongly suggests a spillover of violence from an interviewee's personal life into his criminal acts. This finding is not consistent with the hypothesis that injury to victims is primarily situational but instead suggests that some persons have a proclivity to injure victims whatever the situation.

Through cross-tabulation, we examined the relation between violence in personal life and injury to victims, on the one hand, and such factors as drugs and alcohol involvement, employment performance, and crime-planning sophistication, on the other. No significant associations were found.

Table 65

VIOLENCE IN PERSONAL LIFE RELATED TO INJURY OF CRIME VICTIM

Measure of Violence in Personal Life	Periods in Which an Interviewee Caused Serious Injury	Periods in Which an Interviewee Caused Slight Injury	Periods in Which an Interviewee Caused No Injury
Mean loss-of-temper score[a]	1.1 (N = 14)	1.2 (N = 5)	0.6 (N = 68)
Median number of fights per period	17.5 (N = 14)	7.0 (N = 5)	2.0 (N = 84)
Median number of fights with weapon per period	3.0 (N = 11)	1.0 (N = 3)	1.0 (N = 59)

[a] Score calculated by assigning a weight of 2 to interviewees who frequently lost their temper, 1 to those who sometimes lost their temper, and 0 to those who never lost it in the specified period.

REVIEW

Judging from their interview responses, these offenders were less inclined to injure their victims as their criminal careers advanced. This trend occurred at the same time that the number of crimes against persons was increasing (a consequence of the special nature of our sample). On the other hand, statements regarding willingness to injure a victim, made by interviewees who had not actually injured one, indicated no lessening of the risk to victims as the offenders became older.

These offenders also manifested less violence in their personal lives as they matured; however, when it did occur, the violence was not necessarily less intense in later years. There was also evidence to support a spillover of violence from personal life to criminal acts. Victims were more likely to be injured by offenders who were more inclined to lose their temper, who engaged in a greater number of fights, and who used weapons more often in their fights.

9

VIII. TWO TYPES OF HABITUAL OFFENDERS: INTENSIVES AND INTERMITTENTS

We have referred previously to our interest in identifying interviewees who might conform to an established typology, which in turn would suggest remedies to the problems they pose to society. However, the bulk of this report has shown how diverse this relatively small sample turned out to be, both in personal and in criminal aspects.

Nevertheless, as pointed out in Sec. III, a broad dichotomy of offender tyes emerged from the data: the *intensive* type and the *intermittent* type. We perceived the intensive type as the more professional offender whose criminal activity seemed to be sustained and consciously directed, with deliberate attention paid to avoiding arrest. We perceived the intermittent type as an offender who did not view himself as a professional criminal; whose criminal activity was more irregular and opportunistic; and who was less heedful of the risks and consequences of criminal acts and more prone to arrest. In Sec. III these offender types were distinguished by the use of a crime seriousness index reflecting the frequency and gravity of crimes. As a result, 16 interviewees with higher scores were identified as the intensive type, and the other 33, the intermittent type.

This section first presents brief profiles of the two offender types, conveying qualitative impressions of the dichotomy. Then it reexamines topics already considered for the interview sample as a whole (e.g., criminal sophistication, prosecutorial treatment, and drugs and alcohol involvement), to discern any association with the intensive-intermittent dichotomy.

OFFENDER PROFILES

Ed: The Typical Intensive

The respondent who typifies the intensive offender is a quiet-spoken, articulate, and intense man in his late forties whom we shall call Ed. He was reared in the black ghetto of a large Southwestern city and did not move to California until he was in his mid-thirties. His pattern of criminal activity included frequent burglaries and robberies to support a rather hedonistic lifestyle. He progressed from irregular stealing and fighting as a member of a juvenile gang to a steady life of crime as a solidly married man when older. His prison experience runs the gamut from juvenile training schools and work gangs in the Southwest to maximum-security institutions in California, including San Quentin's death row.

Juvenile Years. Ed's parents separated soon after he was born, and his mother earned a living at a variety of domestic jobs. He had no brothers or sisters. Ed was reared by a woman for whom his mother worked, and he recalls this woman and his mother fondly. The district in which Ed was raised was known as "blood alley" because of the violence and crime that flourished there. For self-protection Ed began carrying a gun at a fairly young age, like many of his peers. His first serious crimes in his early teens were small-time burglaries and petty thefts, many of them committed with his gang. Composed of blacks and Chicanos known as Pachucos, the gang operated in its own neighborhood, with little interference from the police or the older members of the community. They had no fear of arrest because there was scant police coverage in the black areas of the city. The only danger was in being spotted in a criminal act by plainclothesmen who might be driving through the district on their way elsewhere.

Before turning 18, Ed said, he committed about 40 burglaries, usually with three or four regular partners. They rarely planned their crimes. The stolen goods were sold to a familiar fence, and Ed's usual take was about $30. The extent of Ed's confinement during this time was several months spent in juvenile training schools for theft or burglary.

Young Adult Years. Ed served two years in the Navy. After being discharged, he lived alone in his old neighborhood, supporting himself through occasional odd jobs and through the profits of crimes. He reports that his income averaged around $50 per week. He remembers having been depressed and frustrated over his inability to get a well-paying job to obtain the things he wanted out of life. He drank frequently, and his group often drank to build up their nerve to pull a job. Ed had a violent temper and often engaged in fights with his crime partners and friends. Many of these fights involved weapons and resulted in injuries.

The crime that led to his first long incarceration at the age of 19, shortly after his Navy service, was a spontaneous act that is associated more with the intermittent type of offender. Ed and his partner decided to rob a shoeshine boy whom they had observed several times operating at the same location. They were caught in the act by a plainclothes police car that was passing. Without the advice of counsel, Ed pled guilty to attempted armed robbery and received a prison sentence of five years, serving three years before being released. In prison he worked in crews chopping cotton and did not participate in correctional treatment programs.

After release, Ed went to live with his mother, fully intending, he says, to find work and avoid crime. However, it was only eight weeks until he resumed criminal activity. He committed crimes for about two years before he was incarcerated again.

During this period, between 22 and 24 years of age, Ed married and established a household with his spouse and his mother. He says his relationship with his family was unsatisfactory because they opposed his criminal activities. Crime was his main means of support; he worked at odd jobs only about 20 percent of the time. He estimates his income from legitimate work at $50-$100 per week.

Ed describes his outlook on life at this time as hostile and assaultive. Apart from four or five burglaries, which brought him about $50 each, he specialized in robbery. During these two years he reports having committed about 60 robberies, in which the average take was about $40. All involved a handgun.

Ed says that he used the loot from his crimes to support his family and to engage in a good deal of partying. He was still heavily influenced by his friends and committed most of his crimes with two or three partners. Whereas most of his earlier crimes were committed in his immediate neighborhood, he now robbed throughout the state. He continued to operate mainly in black areas, and he believes that the main reason he escaped arrest was the general lack of police coverage in these areas. He had no fear of being arrested, was not troubled by the thought of going back to prison, and considered robbery the only feasible means of supporting the lifestyle he desired.

As was characteristic of many of the heavy offenders, Ed's main strategy for avoiding arrest was to commit crimes alone or with a few trusted partners, and to move around. A number of successful robbers regarded constant movement as a price they had to pay to avoid capture. The only type of planning that Ed engaged in was to visit the location to be robbed several times beforehand. Although he claims never to have injured anyone in his crimes, he says that he was prepared to do so if it were necessary to complete the job.

By this time Ed was heavily using both alcohol and drugs (reds), frequently to prepare himself for a crime. His main robbery targets were small stores, gas stations, and people on the street. He continued to engage in fights, about 20 in this period, in which weapons were sometimes used.

His rap sheet for this period does not show any arrests except the one that led to his conviction and imprisonment for another two years. The conviction was for homicide that resulted from a fight rather than a robbery.

In his second prison term Ed had difficulty adjusting to the institution, mainly because of troubles with other inmates. His hostile attitude often touched off arguments and fights. As before, he participated in work gangs rather than rehabilitation programs. After release, he went back to live with his mother, found work immediately, and remained employed for about a year before resuming crime and accumulating a long string of arrests.

Adult Years. The most recent period in his career covers the time from his second release at about age 26 until his current incarceration, which came in his late thirties. During this period of nearly fifteen years, he served six years of a ten-year prison term for a robbery conviction when he was 28. That conviction was the last entry on his rap sheet for a crime committed in his home state. After release from his third prison term, at about age 34, he moved to California, where he was intensely active in crime for the next seven or eight years.

His California rap sheet contains 17 arrests, several each for robbery, burglary, theft, and indecent exposure. Six were for public intoxication, misdemeanors, or traffic violations. He received brief jail sentences for one of the robberies and for two of the indecent exposures. A probation sentence was imposed for one of the burglaries. The remaining cases were either dismissed or resulted in no jail time

In this latest period, he maintained a satisfactory relationship in cohabitation with a woman, but he recalls still being depressed and frustrated. Hostility and revenge were part of his motivation for crime. He had been receiving a disability income for an injury sustained while working and lived quite well on it, driving a fine car, wearing good clothes, and eating well. When the disability income was cut off, he decided to return to robbery rather than cheapen his style of living. By then he was no longer one of a group committing crimes but was much more self-directed. However, he did have a partner most of the time. He committed about 20 burglaries averaging about $200 per job and 30 robberies averaging $300 each.

Ed handled his robberies with more sophistication than in earlier years. He and his partner would visit a location several times to case it and determine how much money was likely to be on hand. They would also check on the police's patrol coverage of the area, sometimes using a policeband radio. Ed believes that some cases against him were dismissed because the evidence was poorly prepared by the police.

As before, Ed was using both alcohol and drugs regularly. He was not afraid of being arrested; his main concern was simply to preserve his lifestyle. The crimes of his latest period were limited to the area around the California city in which he lived. His targets expanded to include larger stores and, finally, a bank. In at least one of these crimes, a victim was seriously injured. The robbery for which Ed was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to his current prison term resulted in the killing of one of the victims. Ed claims that a former girlfriend, acting out of revenge, informed on him.

In the most recent proceedings against him, Ed feels that he was poorly represented by the appointed counsel. He declares that an accomplice killed the victim and that his prison sentence was unfairly harsh. His death sentence was overturned by an appeals court, and he is now serving a life term. He has not thought about what he will do when he gets out.

In summary, Ed is an aggressive and articulate criminal who for many years was able to support himself through crime. His violent temperament and steady use of alcohol and drugs made him dangerous to his friends and his crime partners as well as to his victims. One cannot conclude that Ed ever seriously desired to live his life in a way different from the way he did.

Archie: The Sophisticated Intensive

Although Ed's offense rate and sophistication level are somewhat lower than the mean for the intensive offender group, his career pattern was fairly typical. A more successful pattern of criminal behavior is exemplified in the handsome, intelligent, smooth-talking offender whom we call Archie; he was the most sophisticated burglar-robber in our sample.

Juvenile and Young Adult Years. Archie left home at age 13 and traveled around the country as a transient, sometimes supporting himself as a truck driver. Archie claims to have committed about 500 burglaries, 500 auto thefts, and 5 robberies before his eighteenth birthday. Of them, he was arrested for only 1 robbery. As he was not convicted, however, he has no juvenile record. Even in this early phase of his criminal career, Archie was quite sophisticated in his MO. He used theatrical makeup to disguise himself for his burglaries and robberies, including contact lenses of various colors. He recalls being fairly violent and obsessed about his small size. He injured one of his robbery victims when the man tried to resist.

Archie's first incarceration did not come until his mid-thirties. For this conviction he served several years in a California prison. Although his rap sheet shows nine arrests for drug violations and petty theft, the only serious prison time he served before his present term was for an auto-theft conviction.

Before his first incarceration, Archie was employed much of the time, but his main source of income was crime. His wife was a heroin addict. Between his eighteenth birthday and his first incarceration, he estimates that he committed about 100 grand thefts, 100 burglaries, and 12 robberies. His average take per robbery was about $2500. He was never arrested for any of these crimes. He used the loot mainly to support his wife's drug habit and for partying.

The main targets of Archie's robberies were savings and loan banks or payroll offices. Archie strongly preferred savings and loans to commercial banks because of their greater vulnerability. His MO was to disguise himself in full theatrical makeup and to enter the savings and loan carrying a sawed-off shotgun, which he would point at a young girl employee.

The main targets of Archie's burglaries were pawnshops or businesses. His few residential burglaries were at private homes where an informer had told him a valuable collection or large sums of money were kept. His typical MO was to make the acquaintance of the prospective victim and gain access to his home to learn where the valuables were kept. Within a month after befriending the victim, Archie would burglarize his house. He also performed insurance-fraud burglaries in which the victim would indicate the articles he wanted stolen. Archie would burglarize the house at a prearranged time, stealing the articles that had been specified and selling them to a fence. The fence would profit, Archie would profit, and the insurance company would reimburse the victim for the items stolen.

Archie reports having shot victims in both burglaries and robberies when they tried to resist. He also mentions having retaliated against two heroin addicts who were friends of his wife and who apparently had tried to kill him: "I spent several days with them and the matter was taken care of satisfactorily." Although neither addict was killed, Archie says that both were seriously injured. Archie relates that his first conviction and incarceration occurred because his wife informed on him when he was trying to stop her from using drugs.

Adult Years. After release from the first incarceration, in his late thirties, Archie remained on the street about five years before being incarcerated for his present term. During this period he committed only four robberies, at large stores or markets, and they yielded very large amounts of money. As in his earlier years, he engaged in elaborate planning for each crime, including stakeouts of the location, disguises, mapping of his escape route, and monitoring of the police activity in the area. Finally Archie was convicted by a jury on two counts of armed robbery with a prior felony conviction, and he is serving two concurrent sentences of five-to-life; he is also serving two consecutive five-to-life sentences for the use of a firearm in these robberies.

Common elements in the careers of Ed and Archie and the other intensive offenders are their heavy criminal activity and their ability to avoid incarceration for extended periods of time. The intensive type is not uniformly as violent as Ed and Archie in personal relations and crimes. The contrast between Ed and Archie underscores the disparities among intensive offenders. For example, Ed often operated in a gang or group, while Archie was a loner who engaged in sophisticated planning for his crimes. Both men are quite articulate about their experience in the ways of the criminal justice system. Both have acquired a taste for high living and have no legitimate means of supporting such a lifestyle when they return to the street.

Ken: The Intermittent

Ken represents more than half our sample. Although his career pattern is marked by an occasional spurt of criminal activity, its most significant characteristics are the irregularity and mindlessness of the criminal events. The intermittent offenders were much more likely to be apprehended than the intensives, so their careers contain substantial amounts of prison time.

Juvenile Years. Ken, the youngest of four children in a white, lower middle-class family, was born in 1944. His parents separated when he was 4, and all of the children were placed in the care of state welfare agencies. His sister was eventually adopted, but the three brothers spent nearly all of their childhood in a foster home located on the outskirts of Sacramento. Ken, who has seen neither of his parents since their separation, was later told by his brothers that they were better off without their parents because they had made life at home unpleasant with their arguing, fighting, and heavy drinking. There is an indication that Ken suffered head injuries when he was 2 years old, possibly a result of parental abuse. His parents were apparently not involved in other criminal activity.

Ken's brothers, four and eight years older than he, influenced him strongly, especially during his adolescence. "They were the only family I've ever known, and we've been very close." The foster home for the three boys was a farm. They had few friends; most of the other boys at the home were either younger or older, and other kids at school "avoided all of us from the foster home like we were the plague." He was not a good student (his IQ classification is dull normal), and he had become an habitual truant by the seventh grade. He recalls having felt that he was a stupid misfit and having had many quarrels with teachers and students, often after school in company with his brothers. He was finally expelled from school in the eighth grade, at the age of 15.

When he left school, Ken also left the foster home to join his brothers in the apartment to which they had moved about a year earlier. Ken was not yet involved in crime, except to the extent that the juvenile fights he engaged in disturbed the peace. He has no recollection of having committed theft while living at the foster home.

To support himself in his new circumstances, Ken found a job in a gas station. He was paid $1.45 an hour for about 25 hours of work a week. Ken's first involvement in crime occurred about three months later. He recounted it as follows:

> We had begun to drink and smoke weed on weekends. My brothers had begun to shoplift, to "borrow" cars (always returning them), and to do other small-time stuff. I really thought that they were something, and I remember during that time being happier than I had ever been. We had a big bunch of guys we hung around with—I was the youngest since they were really my brothers' friends. One weekend we were getting drunk and ran out of beer. None of us had much money, and this one guy said that he knew where we could get a lot of beer for free. It was Saturday afternoon and we waited until about 7 o'clock that night, and three of us went and snuck behind this guy's house. I waited outside as a lookout while another guy picked the lock. We each took two six-packs of beer and one guy took a drill. Then we went back to our place and got drunk. I remember we sat around on the floor afterwards, talking about how easy the whole thing was. Well, that was the first time—nothing very exciting really.
>
> Well, the next Saturday went pretty much the same way. The guys kept saying we should go and get some more beer at this guy's house. I remember thinking that we shouldn't go back to the same guy's house since he might have gotten wise and might be waiting for us. But all the guys said it would be okay. Since I was the youngest, I felt I shouldn't say anything. I guess I just wanted to go along with the crowd. Well, we went back to the guy's house and this time he was in the garage. I was the lookout again. We were all drunk this time out. Well, this big guy held the guy down while my brother and I grabbed the beer. The old guy didn't see my brother and me, only the guy he fought with. He called the police, but they ended up letting the other guy go and we never got caught. Again, I remember going back to the house and hearing all the guys laugh about how easy the whole

> thing was, and why should we ever spend our own money on booze again. Of course, we were all pretty high before, during, and after.
>
> We laid low and didn't do anything for about a month, since our friend's getting arrested scared us a little. About a month or so later, this guy said he had been to his girl's house and saw that her folks kept all this booze in the living room. He said he knew a real easy way to get in and he knew it would be no trouble. I was only 16 then, and we hadn't drunk any hard stuff, so we were really excited. We spent all day drinking beer and getting stoned, and on Saturday night we were ready. The same three of us went out again. We got in the house and got the booze and got back out. I guess a neighbor saw us and called the police. She knew who we were and where we lived, so the police came and arrested us about a half-hour later. We were all so drunk at the time that I remember when the police came in, we just sat there and laughed. I was sent to county jail and spent two months there for theft. The other guys also went to county jail, but they did longer.

Ken feels that his motivation for these crimes was a combination of desire for liquor and the wish to do what his brothers and friends were doing. He did not think very seriously about being caught, and for some reason he believed that doing these things in a group made them less bad. He thinks of them not as crimes but rather as delinquent pranks. No one was armed, and they did not intend to steal money or valuables. He believes that he would not have hurt anyone, and if someone had been at home he is certain that he would have run away rather than hurt the person. He always experienced elation during these "pranks."

After serving the two-month jail term, Ken returned to live with his brothers. The jail experience did not leave a significant impression. At first he intended not to get in trouble again, but he soon forgot this resolve. During his probation period, he had essentially no contacts with his probation officer. In looking for work, Ken found that his former employer at the gas station would not rehire him because of his trouble with the law. He finally found a part-time job at a dry cleaner for at $1.35 an hour, approximately 30 hours per week. He kept this job about three months and remembers having been happy at the time.

Ken committed no crimes during the first month after release from jail. Then his friends began having big parties on weekends. Most of them had not committed robbery, but many shoplifted in liquor stores, and Ken joined in that activity.

Four to six months later Ken helped to commit a crime that resulted in his first long incarceration in a juvenile institution. As he remembers it, about six friends were drinking together one day at his brothers' apartment. His brother showed them a gun and boasted about having bought it that day from someone he had met in jail. A few weeks later, when the same group was again drinking at the apartment, a friend began teasing his brother about carrying the gun for show and not having the nerve to use it. Ken's brother resented the taunt in front of his girlfriend, and an argument ensued. "You just watch me," the brother said. He, Ken, and a friend went to a liquor store, where the brother pulled his gun and took $30 from the owner. The latter knew who they were, called the police, and they were arrested within a few blocks of the store. The result was a two-year commitment to the California Youth Authority at Preston.

Young Adult Years. When Ken was released from Preston at the age of 19, he was in a depressed frame of mind because he had no one to go home to. One brother was in jail and the other was in military service. His former companions were either married, in military service, or incarcerated. He recalls needing someone to care about him even more than he needed a job. He rented a room and spent a month sitting in bars and getting drunk. Then he managed to get a job at a gas station for about 20 hours a week, at $1.65 an hour.

Ken's first postrelease arrest occurred about two months after leaving Preston. It was for panhandling in a restaurant while drunk; he was let off with a fine. His state of depression continued. About two months later, he was arrested on a drunk-driving charge and served 40 days in the county jail. Afterwards, all he did was go to work and then directly to a bar to drink. He became acquainted with an older woman, apparently an alcoholic, and later moved in with her and her two children. He lost his job because of poor attendance; his hangovers made getting up in the morning too difficult. He and the woman lived on her welfare check. She became pregnant, and they were married. They were very poor. Much of what money they had was spent on alcohol. Arguments became constant, and he would go alone to bars to escape.

Ken decided to get money for his family in any way he could. He began to visit various neighborhoods, watch for people to leave their homes, and then burglarize them. He pawned the stolen goods with a friend from his earlier years. His wife was unaware of his crimes; he told her he was working at a dry cleaner. Ken committed approximately 20 of these burglaries over a period of six months.

In one burglary he stole a handgun. He showed it to a friend at a bar that night, and they decided to use it the next night to rob a grocery store. The friend had done robberies before and reassured Ken that it would be an easy job. "I could never have done it alone," he said. "I was scared all day and spent the time getting drunk, as the other guy did." During the robbery Ken held the gun and said nothing. Despite the lack of planning, the robbery went smoothly, and they split about $65 in loot.

The next weekend the two decided to rob a chicken take-out place at closing time. Ken prepared himself by drinking a lot and taking some drugs. Several more robberies followed, but finally one victim tripped an alarm bell. Ken tried to run away, but he was so drunk that he kept stumbling and falling, and he was easily caught by police responding to the alarm. He was convicted and sentenced to prison.

Ken recalled that his first adult prison term was not a bad experience. "All the guys from Preston were there. My wife visited me all the time and we wrote letters. After a while, I got into an alcoholic treatment group. It didn't really help, but I had been told by the guys that if I acted bad when I first got in and then looked like I was straightening out, the prison people would think I was rehabilitated and release me on the first parole date. So that's what I did and I was out in only two years."

Adult Years. Ken's life after release in many ways repeats the pattern established earlier.

> When I got out, I thought things were going to be okay because of my old lady. She had changed a lot during those two years. I figured she had been seeing other guys, but it didn't really bother me. I just thought she would stop when I got out. I really didn't want to get into any more trouble. I knew that if I could stay away from booze, I'd be okay. I had never done anything bad except when I was drunk. I got a job in a shoe repair shop, but I couldn't stand the smell. One day I went home early feeling sick, and I found my wife making it with another guy. I slapped her around some, and left feeling

> mad. I went to a bar and started pouring down the booze—this was the first time in nearly three months. This other guy and I sat getting drunk and talking about how shitty life was. Then we went outside and stopped a cab and got in. After the cab started up, I grabbed the driver by the neck and told him to drive out of town. After he did that we made him get out, and I beat him up and the other guy took his wallet. I didn't have a weapon, but I'm pretty big and I was so mad I had to take it out on someone. I think the other guy had a knife on him, though. We went back to his place and I stayed a week. I didn't go back to work, so I guess I was fired by that time. Then I went back to my wife. We argued all the time. She went on welfare and I lived off that money, spending a lot of time drinking in bars. I'd almost forgotten about the cab job, but three months later the cops came to the house and arrested me. My buddy had ratted on me when the cops grabbed him for something else. I was identified by the cab driver and ended up doing four years of prison time before I escaped. I escaped with this guy I had gotten close to in prison, who was getting some help from his girlfriend. We got outside and the other guy got away clean, but as usual I got caught again. Because of that escape, I did about seven years of time for that cab robbery.

Ken was released from his second adult prison term in 1974, when he was about 30. About a month later he was arrested for robbery and kidnapping with intent to rob. He had not yet looked for a job because he wanted to take it easy and have a good time for a while. He had gone back to his wife and children. Things were all right for a few weeks and then the oldest boy, about 15, was arrested on a drug charge. Ken says that this upset him badly, for he did not want to see the boy turn out the way he did. When the boy came home, Ken had an argument with him, hit him, and left the house. He went to a bar and proceeded to get drunk with a friend. After the bar closed, the two were sitting in an alley when a young black couple passed. Ken grabbed the girl, his friend held the man, and they forced them to return to their car and drive out of town. There, Ken and his friend beat and robbed the couple. They drove off in the couple's car, but Ken was so drunk that he soon crashed into a freeway divider. The police found him unconscious behind the wheel; his friend had fled. Ken was arrested, identified, and convicted of first-degree robbery. The charges of kidnapping and being armed (with a length of steel pipe picked up in the alley) were dropped in the course of plea negotiations. He is currently serving a term of five years to life.

Ken's presentence investigation report diagnosed him as an inadequate personality with acute dependence on alcohol. It recommended that he be committed to a mental institution for treatment. The sentencing judge decided otherwise, and his view of Ken was placed in the record:

> This defendant should be incarcerated for life or until his physical strength has declined materially through aging. He is a man who has been shown to be aggressive and violent toward his victims. His assaultiveness is prompted by the use of alcohol to which he is deeply addicted. He attempts to deny his feelings of inadequacy by his aggressive behavior.
>
> In the past, when refraining from the use of alcohol, he has responded well to supervision and controls in an institutional setting, but he has usually failed to avail himself of available programs to upgrade himself. It is highly doubtful that rehabilitation is a practical objective for him.

THE INTENSIVE/INTERMITTENT OFFENDER DICHOTOMY RELATED TO OTHER ASPECTS OF CRIMINAL CAREERS

We examined the interview-response data to see whether the two groups of offenders differed significantly in the career aspects studied. The rest of this section reports the significant associations found; aspects in which a weak association was shown are omitted.

Juvenile Experiences

The interview responses did not generally disclose early evidence of the two offender types. However, the following exceptions are noteworthy (see Table 66).

Table 66

JUVENILE CHARACTERISTICS RELATED TO OFFENDER TYPE
(%)

Characteristic	Intensive Type (N = 16)	Intermittent Type (N = 33)
Committed serious crime before age of 13	44	21
Was an habitual truant	44	27
Was incarcerated before the age of 18	50	73

The last finding is consistent with other indications that the intensive offenders were able to avoid crime sanctions better than were the intermittent offenders.

Criminal Sophistication

Crime-Planning Sophistication. The arithmetic mean of an offender's sophistication scores for the several career periods in which he committed property crimes was used as a measure of his career-long planning sophistication. Table 67 compares these mean career scores for the two offender types. Despite the overall weakness in crime-planning sophistication among our sample, the intensive offenders show significantly greater sophistication than the intermittent offenders (as indicated by the difference in the means).

Use of Crime Partners. As pointed out in Sec. V, a preference for operating alone suggests greater criminal sophistication. Table 68 displays, by career period, how the two types differed in frequency of not using a crime partner. The substantial difference in the juvenile period indicates that the intensives adopted a solitary approach to committing crimes—the predominant adult mode—at an earlier age than did the intermittents.

Fear of Arrest. We might expect intensive and intermittent offenders to differ in their fear of arrest. Table 69 shows the proportions in each type that were concerned about arrest in varying degrees before each of the three landmark offenses. Except in the juvenile period, where the intensive type appears less concerned about arrest than the intermittent type, these data do not clearly indicate a strong difference between the offender types in this respect.

Table 67

MEAN CAREER CRIME-PLANNING SOPHISTICATION SCORE RELATED TO OFFENDER TYPE

Distribution of Score	Intensive Type (N = 16)	Intermittent Type (N = 33)
Median	5.0	1.0
Mean	4.4	1.5
Standard deviation	2.8	2.0

NOTE: The possible extremes for the sophistication score for a given career period are a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 16.

Table 68

PROPORTION COMMITTING CRIMES ALONE, BY OFFENDER TYPE
(%)

Type	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
Intensive	60	43	64
Intermittent	16	32	53

Table 69

FEAR OF ARREST RELATED TO OFFENDER TYPE
(%)

	Juvenile Period (N = 41)		Young Adult Period (N = 44)		Adult Period (N = 42)	
Degree of Concern	Intensive	Intermittent	Intensive	Intermittent	Intensive	Intermittent
Very concerned	—	23	13	7	21	18
Somewhat concerned	7	12	25	25	21	32
Little concerned	20	27	25	36	7	11
Not concerned	73	38	37	32	50	39

Monetary Gain. Earlier we hypothesized that monetary gain reflects deliberation in the choice of targets and that such deliberation is a sign of criminal sophistication. As burglary appears to be a selective type of crime, we chose to display the differences in monetary gain between the intensive and the intermittent types for the respondents who reported committing burglaries in each career period (see Table 70).

Strong distinctions are seen between the two offender types, not only in the amount of monetary gain but also in the extent of burglary activity, especially in the juvenile period.

Table 70

MONETARY GAIN FROM BURGLARIES RELATED TO OFFENDER TYPE

	Juvenile Period (N = 27)[a]		Young Adult Period (N = 29)[a]		Adult Period (N =9)[a]	
	Intensive	Intermittent	Intensive	Intermittent	Intensive	Intermittent
Median gain per burglary	$100	$15	$200	$300	$300	$50
Median gain per burglar	$6,000	$140	$10,000	$3,000	$7,500	$100
Number of burglaries[b]	1,331	122	504	286	75	6
Number of burglars	11	16	14	15	5	4

[a] Number of respondents who reported their gain from burglaries during the period.

[b] In which gain was reported.

Prosecutorial Treatment

As a measure for examining the association between prosecutorial treatment and the intensive/intermittent dichotomy, we chose the issue of whether or not the prosecutor filed priors in the proceedings of the respondents' landmark offenses. Table 71 displays the data. Here we note a clear difference between the offender types in the prosecutor's threatening to file priors, but not in his actually charging them.

Table 71

PROSECUTOR'S USE OF PRIORS RELATED TO OFFENDER TYPE
(%)

Use of Priors	Intensive Type (N = 16)	Intermittent Type (N = 33)
Prosecutor threatened to file priors	75	48
Prosecutor formally charged priors	44	39
Priors were:		
Dropped in plea bargaining	57	31
Not considered in sentencing	—	15
Used to increase sentence	43	46
Don't know	—	08

Drugs and Alcohol Involvement

According to the classes defined in Sec. VI, Table 72 displays the drugs/alcohol involvement of the two offender types, compared with the sample mean. The data show that interviewees involved only with alcohol were far more likely to be the intermittent type. Otherwise, about the same percentage of both types had some involvement with drugs or alcohol or both—62 (intensives) and 76 (intermittents).

Table 72

DRUGS/ALCOHOL INVOLVEMENT RELATED TO OFFENDER TYPE
(%)

	Entire Sample (N = 49)	Intensive Type (N = 16)	Intermittent Type (N = 33)
Drugs-involved	24	25	25
Alcohol-involved	29	6	39
Involved with both	18	31	12
Involved with neither	29	38	24

Socioeconomic Factors

Peer Influence. We noted in Sec. VI that peer influence is thought to be crucial in instigating and shaping criminal activity. The interview responses indicated that peer-directed criminal activity was significantly more likely in the juvenile period than in the adult periods. Here we are interested in whether peer influence differs between the two offender types (see Table 73). The data show that the intensive offenders were preponderantly self-directed throughout their careers, while the intermittent offenders shifted considerably in progressing from juveniles to adults.

Table 73

Self- Versus Peer-Directed Behavior Related to Offender Type
(%)

	Juvenile Period (N = 42)		Young Adult Period (N = 48)		Adult Period (N = 41)	
Primary Influence on Behavior	Intensive	Intermittent	Intensive	Intermittent	Intensive	Intermittent
Self	67	48	75	83	79	93
Peers	33	48	25	17	21	7
Don't know	—	4	—	—	—	—

Employment Performance. Applying the criterion of "better employment" (see Sec. VI), we found that in the sample of 49 interviewees, 7 were better employed in the juvenile period, 13 in the young adult period, and 20 in the adult. Examining these 40 career periods of better employment related to offender type, we found an association that is not highly significant but consistent with expectations—there were many more better-employed among the intermittent than among the intensive offenders.

Use of Violence

Violence toward Victims. Table 74 summarizes the interviewees' responses about injuring their victims by offender type. These results suggest that the intensive offenders had a slightly greater inclination to injure their victims. It could be argued, of course, that the underlying inclination may not be different between the two types, because the intensive type simply created more opportunities for injuring victims by committing crimes more often.

To sharpen the distinctions, we incorporated the responses of interviewees who had not injured their victims about their willingness to injure if necessary to complete the crime. We found that 50 percent of the intensive offenders and 18 percent of the intermittent offenders either injured a victim seriously or said that, in at least two of their career periods, they would have injured a victim if it had been necessary to complete the crime. This finding counters the frequently expressed view that the more experienced an offender is the more controlled he is in committing a crime and the less likely he is to injure his victim.

Table 74

INJURY OF CRIME VICTIM RELATED TO OFFENDER TYPE
(%)

	Juvenile Period		Young Adult Period		Adult Period	
Degree of Injury	Intensive	Intermittent	Intensive	Intermittent	Intensive	Intermittent
Serious	25	6	25	6	12.5	6
Slight	—	6	—	3	12.5	9

Violence in Personal Life. As a measure of the offenders' use of violence in their personal lives, we used the number of fights the interviewees reported engaging in. Table 75 shows the median number of fights by offender type. These data are a further indication of the more prominent role of violence in the lives of the intensive type, even though both types appear to have matured out of personal violence.

Table 75

MEDIAN NUMBER OF PERSONAL FIGHTS RELATED TO OFFENDER TYPE

	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
Intensive type	10	6	[illegible]
Intermittent type	3	1	0

Motivation for Crimes

Distinctions between the offender types in self-reported explanations for criminal activity are shown in Table 76. Only a few substantial differences are revealed in the earlier career periods:

- In the juvenile career period, the intensive type was less prompted to crime than the intermittent type for thrills, attention, and status and more prompted by a desire for money for rent, for self-support, and for high living.
- In the young adult period the intensive type, compared with the intermittent type, used the money gained from crime more for drugs, alcohol, and family support and less for rent and self-support; was less influenced by loss of employment and more influenced by friends; and tended to spend on drugs and drinking rather than on self-support.

Table 76

EXPLANATIONS FOR CRIMINAL ACTIVITY RELATED TO OFFENDER TYPE
(%)

Response	Juvenile Period		Young Adult Period		Adult Period	
	Intensive	Intermittent	Intensive	Intermittent	Intensive	Intermittent
	Main Reason for Crimes					
Hostility, revenge	19	3	13	6	13	6
Thrills, attention, status	19	39	—	—	6	6
Money for drugs, alcohol	13	6	38	21	19	27
Money for women	—	3	6	9	12	3
Money for rent, self-support	31	9	12	30	19	18
Money for family support	—	—	25	3	12	6
No other alternative	—	—	—	6	—	3
Peer influence	13	21	—	6	6	—
Don't know	—	—	—	15	—	12
No response	6	18	6	15	13	18
	Contributing Factors					
Marital or family difficulties	50	9	25	24	13	18
Loss of employment	6	3	—	24	6	18
Heavy debts	—	—	13	3	19	6
Influence of friends	50	39	38	15	19	15
Gang activities	25	24	—	3	—	—
Under the influence of alcohol or drugs while committing crimes	13	15	19	27	31	27
Not applicable	—	3	—	3	6	3
Other	6	3	44	6	31	9
	Use of Monetary Gain from Crimes					
High living	56	33	38	30	38	24
Self-support	13	6	6	18	—	27
Family support	—	3	13	6	25	9
Drugs, drinking	—	12	38	24	19	21
Gambling, debts	6	—	—	3	—	3
Other	13	6	6	3	6	—

NOTE: N = 16 (intensive type) and 33 (intermittent type).

Arrest, Conviction, and Incarceration

We now turn from the interview response data to the data from official records, to examine arrest, conviction, and incarceration rates aggregated by offender type (see Table 77).

Table 77

ARREST, CONVICTION, AND INCARCERATION RATES RELATED TO OFFENDER TYPE

	Intensive Type (N = 14)[a]	Intermittent Type (N = 33)	Entire Sample (N = 47)[a]
Average number of arrests per interviewee (all offense types)	12.4	11.4	12.3
Proportion of arrests for nondrug offenses	50%	67%	61%
Conviction rate for nondrug arrests	0.64	0.71	0.68
Incarceration rate for nondrug arrests	0.49	0.60	0.57

[a] Rap sheets could not be obtained for two interviewees.

The intensive offenders were thus arrested more frequently than the intermittent offenders. The modestly higher incarceration rate for the intermittent offenders appears to be inconsistent with their lower level of criminal activity. To clarify the picture, we compared this rate between the two offender types by period (see Table 78).

Table 78

INCARCERATION RATE RELATED TO OFFENDER TYPE

	Juvenile Period	Young Adult Period	Adult Period
Intensive type	0.25	0.39	0.71
Intermittent type	0.45	0.55	0.71

The difference in incarceration rate between the two types is more marked earlier in their careers. Why would the criminal justice system have this selective effect, particularly at an early age? The answer depends on one's assumptions about the relationship between incarceration and later criminal activity. If later crime rates are thought to be unaffected by the frequency and length of earlier incarceration, it appears that the system was selectively treating the less risky offenders more harshly. If, on the other hand, incarceration is thought to reduce later criminality (a hypothesis that other studies have not substantiated), the lower offense rates of the intermittents could be attributed to their more frequent incarceration at an earlier age.

To examine differences in probability of arrest, we used data from both the interview responses and the rap sheets to compare the two offender types in the proportion of self-reported crimes that resulted in arrest (see Table 79). The juvenile period is excluded because of the known underreporting of juvenile arrests on rap sheets (see Appendix C). The differences between the two offender types are substantial and all the more striking in view of the higher conviction and incarceration rates for the intermittent type shown in Table 78.

Table 79

PROBABILITY OF ARREST IN YOUNG ADULT AND ADULT PERIODS RELATED TO OFFENDER TYPE

	Intensive Type	Intermittent Type
All nondrug offenses	0.04	0.21
Burglaries only	0.04	0.21
Robberies only	0.07	0.37

IMPLICATIONS

The intensive/intermittent distinction between habitual offender types appears to have considerable policy significance. The intensives pursued their criminal activity with much more persistence and skill than did the intermittents, and they committed far more crimes. Yet they incurred the formal sanctions of the system (arrest, conviction, and incarceration) less frequently than did the intermittents. The intermittent offenders were five times more likely to be arrested for any one crime than the intensives. And, once arrested, they were more likely to be convicted or incarcerated.

In controlling crime, the intensives are the offenders that sentencing and incarceration policies should try to reach. Current policies are unselective. It remains to be seen whether the intensive offender can be more clearly identified from official records and whether a more appropriate treatment can be devised. At this time we can only point out the danger of relying on a simple distinction of habitual offenders based solely on prior convictions. It glosses over significant differences between the intermittent offender, who appears to pose no more risk to the public than other types of offenders, and the intensive offender, who clearly poses a much greater threat.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

This study has systematically examined the career development of a group of offenders about whom there is particular concern in public policy—habitual felons. Resolution of current debates about the crime-reducing potential of incarcerating a greater percentage of such persons for longer terms hinges on estimates of the amount of crime they actually commit and their probability of arrest and conviction. This study provides just such estimates, for a sample of 49 felons, by crime type and period in the criminal career, based on the offenders' own reports.

As to the other policy avenues for dealing with criminals—rehabilitation, deterrence, and prevention—even though our sample is too small and select to permit generalizing to the wider criminal population—this report provides new insight into why a group of serious habitual offenders remained undeterred and unrehabilitated after repeated incarceration and participation in a variety of treatment programs.

In this study, we sought to illuminate the birth and growth of serious criminal careers in the hope of identifying vulnerable times when appropriate interventions by the criminal justice system might best have reduced the offenders' threat to the community. Initially, we were optimistic that such points could be identified, for earlier research had suggested that habitual offenders tend to follow a common maturation process. We expected the interview data to reveal systematic development patterns in which juvenile offenders—peer-influenced, gang-related, and spontaneous—were transformed into adult professional criminals. Moreover, we expected them as adult professionals to pursue crime as a preferred occupation, continually developing their skills, increasing their profits, and becoming more specialized. It is now clear that this is too simplistic a notion of sustained criminal activity and criminal career development. The reality is much more complex and diverse than we imagined. Although some of our empirical findings were consistent with the traditional images, overall, even in an offender sample as small and select as this, the dominant finding was diversity—both in the offenders' personalities and in their conduct. Thus, a key conclusion of this study is that many of the traditional assumptions about the development of habitual offenders need to be reconsidered and restudied.

This section briefly reviews the most important study findings with regard to the nature and criminal activity of this sample. Then it turns to the implications of the findings for policies of rehabilitation, deterrence, crime prevention, and incapacitation. The latter discussion is too preliminary to be regarded as a proposal for changes in current policies; our observations should be substantiated by further study of habitual offenders. Nevertheless, these conclusions should enable policymakers to expand their perspective on habitual felons.

THE INTERVIEWEES AND THEIR CRIMINAL CAREERS

Early Criminal Activity

Serious criminal involvement began at 13 or 14 years of age for the majority of the sample, and their first recorded arrest occurred on the average at the age of 15. Only seven reported that they committed no serious crime as a juvenile. Thirty-two of the 42 juvenile offenders had been confined in a correctional facility before the age of 18. Taking the date of the first recorded arrest as the beginning of a criminal career, we calculated that the sample had been involved in crime an average of about 20 years, of which about half had been spent in jail or prison.

A great majority attributed their early criminal involvement to peer-group influences. Although broken homes, lower economic status, and sibling criminal records were characteristic of many in the sample, they were not overwhelmingly so; nor did such factors explain differences in later criminal behavior.

Following a conventional pattern, these offenders progressed from predominantly auto theft and burglary in the juvenile period to a greater proportion of robberies and forgeries in the adult years. The majority said they had switched to robbery because it required little preparation and few tools, was easy to do, seldom required hurting anyone, and offered unlimited potential targets. Also, robbery could be committed alone, eliminating the risk of being implicated by a partner. The offenders saw "take" as the primary influencing factor in deciding whether or not to commit a certain crime, the risks involved being secondary.

Rate and Types of Crimes

According to their own statements, this sample of offenders had committed many serious crimes—over 10,000 of the nine offense types considered. The average number was 20 per offender per year of street time. The offense rate varied considerably by crime class. The average number of *violent crimes* (rape, assault, robbery, purse snatching) committed per year of street time was 1.8; *safety crimes* (violent crimes plus burglary), 5.9; and *nondrug crimes* (safety crimes plus auto theft, grand theft, and forgery), 11.9.

The level of criminal activity was not constant but declined with age. The number of self-reported offenses committed per month of street time noticeably declined as the sample grew older. Specifically, the juvenile period average of 3.2 serious crimes per month of street time decreased to 1.5 in the young adult period and to 0.6 in the adult period. Declining offense rates were also shown in each crime class except violent crimes, which is dominated by robbery. The latter anomaly probably owes to the sample selection criterion that the current incarceration be for a robbery conviction. Previous studies of criminal behavior, based on official records, have found that participation in crime declines with age. A unique contribution of this study is the finding that the level of criminal activity diminishes even among those who remain active in crime.

Though the level declined, there was a certain steadiness about this sample's crime. Asked how much time passed after their release from incarceration before they started committing crimes again, the respondents indicated a median time of 4-5 months after the juvenile landmark incarceration and 2-3 months after the young adult. Slightly over half of the sample said they had serious intentions of not returning to crime during those months; the rest said they either intended to return to crime (25 percent) or were unsure about it. Most believed that their resumption of crime could not have been deterred. For those who believed it could have been deterred, certainly of apprehension would have been the most influential factor.

Few of the offenses committed were followed by arrest. Only 3 percent of the juvenile nondrug crimes culminated in arrest. Drug-selling offenses are excluded because a large number were committed with no resulting arrests. The percentage of crimes resulting in arrest increased to 6 in the young adult period, 20 in the adult period. The rising arrest rate is partly explained by the increasing incidence of crimes against persons, which are solved more often than property crimes. However, the arrest rate for burglary, a property crime, also rose from 8 percent in the young adult period to 29 percent in the adult period. The percentage of convictions among arrests for any type of offense increased from 54 in the juvenile period to 78 in the adult period. Thus, while offense rates decreased markedly over time, the probabilities of arrest, conviction, and incarceration per offense all tended to increase.

The sample generally pursued crime opportunistically, appearing to prefer diversity to specialization. In any several-month period these offenders typically committed crimes of various types. Whatever modus operandi or selectivity of targets an offender developed (e.g., small stores with women proprietors) was usually a continuation of his most recent experience rather than the result of careful strategy.

Criminal Sophistication

The majority of the crimes committed by the sample were simple or even crude in execution. Only a small minority seemed to use care—much less sophistication—in planning and carrying out their crimes. For the typical offender, pre-crime planning was limited to visiting the location before the crime and, less often, staking out the target. Such measures as wearing a disguise, developing a new identity, and obtaining a special car were uncommon. The offenders who were the most sophisticated tended to develop sophistication at an early age; it was not necessarily the product of a long career in crime. Most of the sample remained geographically limited throughout their careers. Only a few ever ranged outside a single state. Few had acquired special techniques for avoiding arrest. The experience of these offenders counters the notion that hardened criminals manipulate criminal justice processes by retaining expensive private counsel, by gaining excessive continuances of their criminal proceedings, by intimidating witnesses, and so on.

The assumption that habitual offenders develop networks of persons to assist them in crime appears misplaced. These offenders tended to work alone more frequently as their careers developed. In fact, the more sophisticated the offender, the more likely he was to work alone, being unwilling to share the profits or risk betrayal.

Contrary to the expectation that an offender's illicit profits would grow with his experience, these offenders, even in the later phases of their careers, averaged only a few thousand dollars per year. Few were well rewarded for their criminal acts.

Legitimate Employment

The literature suggests that as an offender's career progresses and he becomes increasingly involved in a criminal subculture, he loses interest and capability in legitimate employment. That hypothesis was not borne out by our sample as a whole. In their most recent career period, nearly half were combining a full-time or nearly full-time job with their criminal pursuits. On the other hand, the generally poor employment performance of our sample accords with the findings of earlier studies. Our data give scant support to the notion that loss of employment triggers a spate of crime; less than 15 percent of the sample said it did. The "better-employed" offenders committed fewer crimes against persons than the rest of the sample. They did not, however, have fewer crime-free intervals.

Violence

Though these offenders committed a higher rate of crimes against persons later in their careers, the proportion who actually injured their victims declined over time. On the other hand, the offenders' statements about their willingness to injure a victim indicated no lessening of the risk to victims as the offenders became older and more experienced. The offenders who were more prone to violence in their personal lives were also more likely to have injured their victims. The incidence of violence in personal life decreased with age.

Role of Drugs and Alcohol

Although our data do not suffice to establish causal linkages, drugs and alcohol clearly played a prominent role in a majority of these criminal careers. By official records, about half of the respondents had a history of drug involvement; by their own statements, about two-thirds had been heavy users of drugs or alcohol or both. During the adult periods, fully 60 percent were under the influence of alcohol or drugs when committing crimes; and the desire for money to buy drugs and alcohol was the single most frequently cited reason for committing crimes (cited by about one-third of the sample).

As for associations between drugs and alcohol involvement and other offender characteristics, we found that the offenders involved with alcohol alone—compared with those involved with drugs alone, both drugs and alcohol, or neither—committed crimes less often but were more likely to be arrested. The offenders involved with both drugs and alcohol had the highest offense rates.

Prison and Postrelease Experience

Only about a quarter of the sample said that they had had trouble adjusting to prison life. When they were juveniles, the trouble arose primarily from problems of getting along with other inmates. With age and more frequent incarceration, the main source of difficulty was not other inmates but the offender's own feelings—for example, a realization that life is short and a desire to be on the outside, living it.

In each of the three landmark incarcerations, about half the sample said they had participated in a formal prison rehabilitation program—mainly vocational training, education, or group counseling. Only a small minority had taken part in individual counseling or a drug and alcohol program. The proportion who found the programs useful rose from about half in the juvenile and young adult periods to nearly 90 percent in the adult period. Vocational training was the program most favored.

Intensive and Intermittent Offender Types

Despite the diversity in this sample, two broad types—the *intensive* and the *intermittent*—emerged from the data. The intensive type, consisting of about one-third of the sample, was more continuously engaged in crime, more committed to a criminal lifestyle, and more careful about avoiding arrest than the intermittent type, consisting of two-thirds of the sample. Most striking, the average intensive offender committed about ten times as many crimes as the intermittent offender, yet was five times less likely to be arrested for any one crime. Once arrested, the intensive offender was also less likely to be convicted and incarcerated.

Other differences that cross-tabulation revealed were that the intensives were more self-directed early in their careers, obtained significantly more money per crime, and were more likely to have spent the money on drugs and alcohol than were intermittents. Respondents involved with alcohol alone were far more likely to be intermittents than intensives.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The paragraphs below address the implications of the preceding findings for policies of *rehabilitation*, intended to modify behavior from unlawful to lawful; *deterrence*, intended to alter the offender's perceived balance of the gains and costs of crime so that he desists; *prevention*, intended to forestall crime by making its target difficult to reach and unattractive; and *incapacitation*, intended to remove criminal offenders from the community through incarceration.

The implications outlined in the paragraphs below are too preliminary to be regarded as proposals for changes in current criminal justice policy, but it is hoped that they will contribute usefully to policy deliberations.

Rehabilitation

Our sample was by selection a group of persons who had consistently adhered to a criminal lifestyle despite repeated exposure to rehabilitation programs. Though the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts was not a focus of this study, judging from the offenders' own statements the rehabilitation programs in which they participated did not provide a strong inducement for them to end their criminal careers. Most of the sample saw their crimes as freely chosen, preferred acts or as responses to special circumstances, usually arising from a personal relationship. Those who recognized their need for help were thinking mainly of job training. Even so, they did not necessarily believe that vocational training would overcome their tendency to continue in crime; fully half either were unsure about or had no intention of leaving crime.

Correctional authorities view job training as a means of rehabilitating those who commit crimes because they cannot earn an adequate income legitimately. In our sample, criminal motivation was rarely so singular; it usually involved a mixture of instrumental and expressive elements. Still, given the unfailing recidivism of these offenders, the better employed tended to commit less serious crimes. We are thus led to believe that voluntary programs of job training are a constructive means of reducing the criminal toll of habitual offenders.

The low participation of these offenders in drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, coupled with the prominent role of these substances in the respondents' crimes, suggest that drug and alcohol treatment programs could significantly reduce crime if they genuinely helped offenders eliminate their dependency.

Deterrence

Because of the growing evidence that efforts to rehabilitate criminals have fallen far short of expectations, many authorities now advocate concentrating less on improving the offender and more on improving the criminal justice system. Programs designed to speed and streamline the prosecution of criminals are finding widespread support.

Deterrence theory rests on the idea that potential offenders are rational persons who take into account the costs and gains of alternative courses of action. Should the costs of crime sufficiently increase or the benefits sufficiently decrease, potential offenders are likely to decide that the former outweigh the latter and are thereby likely to be deterred from criminal acts. The costs of crime can be magnified by increasing the probability of being apprehended and by increasing the amount and certainty of punishment after apprehension. Deterrence theory holds that potential offenders will be more deterred when they observe that they are more likely to be arrested, convicted, and imprisoned for a crime.

Our sample did not fit the model of rational criminality described above. The majority said that they were unconcerned about the possibility of apprehension, though some attributed their indifference to the clouding of their thinking by drugs and alcohol. More to the point, over half the sample asserted that nothing could have deterred their return to crime after release from their landmark incarcerations. For those who said they could have been deterred, the certainty of apprehension would have influenced them more than other factors, such as the possibility of a longer prison sentence or stricter parole supervision. This perhaps reflects their awareness of a fairly high probability of conviction and incarceration once arrested.

The data give no reason to believe that the length of a prison term affects deterrence. Those who served longer sentences did not have longer periods of street time after release until the next incarceration.

Prevention

Target hardening—making crime targets more difficult to reach—was of dubious effectiveness in preventing this sample's crime. The offenders simply switched to a more accessible target. For example, some interviewees responded that if they were frustrated in committing a store burglary by an effective security system, they would immediately substitute a street robbery. We believe that future studies of the costs and benefits of target hardening should consider the likelihood of a shift to personal crimes if property targets are hardened.

Incapacitation

The continuing criminal activity of this sample in the face of frequent arrests, convictions, and incarcerations is an indication of the inability of previous rehabilitation, deterrence, and prevention efforts to curtail their criminal behavior. The primary alternative for counteracting such offenders is a greater reliance on incapacitation. Incapacitation policies are intended to assure the conviction and prolonged incarceration of serious habitual offenders, once arrested. The rationale is obvious: Offenders cannot commit crimes against the community while in prison, and they are not likely to be able to make up for lost time after release if the probability of reincarceration is high. But an incapacitation policy is both unfair and highly costly if an undue number of inappropriate offenders are given long prison terms. Thus, the effectiveness of this approach rests largely on the ability of the criminal justice system to distinguish among offenders and identify those most deserving of lengthy imprisonment.

Although the length and seriousness of a defendant's prior record give an indication of his propensity toward future serious crime, the predictive value of this information by itself is weak. That is partly because of the poor correlation between offenders' actual behavior and their arrest records. A meager arrest record may disguise a dangerous criminal, even though a long arrest record usually signifies extensive criminal activity. Our data emphasize that arrest records do not suffice in distinguishing among the more serious and the less serious habitual offenders. When we compared the rap sheets of the intensives as a whole with those of the intermittents as a whole, no significant differences emerged between the types—not only in arrests but also in convictions and incarcerations. Yet, by their interview responses, we know that the intensives, less than one-third of the sample, had committed a disproportionately large number of the offenses reported. It is thus crucial to identify the intensive offenders by some means in addition to their criminal records. And if an objective of sentencing is to prevent future crime by incapacitating high-risk offenders, our data suggest that it is counterproductive to concentrate on older habitual offenders. The greatest effect in crimes prevented would come from imprisoning the younger, more active offenders, since individual offense rates appear to decline substantially with age.

What might the additional means of identification be? One would be to make better use of the crime-clearance information police obtain in following up an arrest. With a suspect in custody, police investigators are often able to "clear," or solve, previous crimes by linking them to the suspect through confession, similarity of MO, fingerprint matches, and the like. A majority of the intensives in our sample reported that their arrests led to the clearance of some of their other crimes. In one extreme case, twenty robberies were cleared by the arrest of one offender.

In current practice, much of this information is ignored except to close police files. When the police transfer charges to the prosecutor's office for the filing of a formal complaint, they include only the counts on which there is enough evidence to establish legal guilt. And after finding such evidence on one or two counts, the police tend to discontinue investigating the other cleared crimes. That is because they expect any charges beyond the strongest one or two to be dropped in return for a guilty plea. Even if they are not dropped, multiple convictions often do not increase the sentence. A more systematic attempt to investigate and legally prove additional counts would undoubtedly help distinguish the intensives among habitual offenders.

Another source of information to help identify the most serious offenders is the suspect's record of juvenile arrests and institutional commitments. Juvenile records are considered sensitive information, and their use is highly restricted by law. However, given their potential value in identifying the more serious habitual offenders, it appears that they should be made more accessible to prosecutors and used in sentencing decisions.

The preliminary evidence from this study suggests that incapacitation, by imprisonment, may be the most direct alternative for reducing the societal toll at the hands of habitual offenders, provided that the most serious of them can be identified before their criminality has declined. If crime is to be reduced through incapacitation policies, the following procedural changes should be considered:

- Police and presentence investigators should provide prosecutors and judges with more thorough information—including multiple crime-clearance and juvenile offense data—to help identify the intensive offenders for whom incapacitation may be justified.
- Extended prison sentences should be imposed on offenders whose prior record and current charges reflect serious and sustained criminal activity. These sentences should be imposed at the earliest time such offenders have been identified with reasonable confidence.

NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Though this study has revealed much about a particular group of criminals, it represents just a beginning in the endeavor to understand the careers of serious habitual offenders. The authors are are pursuing the effort begun here. The methodology for obtaining information on offense rates, motivation, and selection of crime type and target will be refined and improved. Methods of cross-checking data for validity will be incorporated. Offenders' utilities and values may be probed more deeply, perhaps by using the techniques of consumer choice and utility or risk-preference analysis. Different samples of offenders will be drawn, such as burglars or juvenile felons, to examine different crime types or periods of career development. Supplemental information may be obtained from family members, acquaintances, or caseworkers.

The research will be costly and will pose problems of data privacy, informed consent, and response bias. However, the crime problem in our cities remains substantial. Street crimes exact an unbearable toll on the poor, the elderly, and the small business proprietor. If we want to know more about the group of offenders who are primarily responsible for these crimes, the effort must be continued.

Appendix A

THE INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

This appendix presents the instrument by which the 49 respondents in our sample were interviewed about their criminal careers.

Each interview was conducted in three sections corresponding to the three career periods defined in this study:

- Juvenile period—from the first self-reported offense through the first juvenile incarceration, or, if no juvenile incarceration, until age 18.
- Young adult period—from release after the first juvenile the first adult of the Rand interview in the current incarceration.
- Adult period—from release after the first adult incarceration to the time of the Rand interview in the current incarceration.

Questions 800-809 were asked only in reference to the juvenile period; questions 1101-1311 were repeated three times in reference to the juvenile, young adult, and adult periods; and questions 4000-4006 were asked only about the adult period. The term "landmark" refers to an offense, arrest, conviction, or incarceration that delimits a career period. Unless stated otherwise, all questions refer to the six months before incarceration, the period of incarceration, and the three months after release. The interviewers were instructed to read only the responses printed in lowercase letters but to code answers corresponding to the responses printed in all-capital letters.

NAME ____

CARD 01 4-5/

IDENTIFIER ☐☐☐ 1-3/ INTERVIEWER ☐☐ 6-7/

OFFENSE ☐☐☐ 8-10/ DATE ADMITTED ☐☐ MO ☐☐ YR 11-14/

ADM TYPE ☐ 15/ 1ST ADM YEAR ☐☐ 16-17/ YR. BIRTH ☐☐ 18-19/

20. ETHNIC GROUP ☐ 20/ 21. MENTAL STATUS ☐ 21/

22. EDUCATION LEVEL ☐ 22/ 23. NARC HIST ☐ 23/

25. AGG. SENTENCE ☐ 24/ 26. # PRIOR COMM. SERVED ☐ 25/

27. # PRIOR COMM. ☐ 26/ 28. # JUVENILE COMM. ☐ 27/

CDC # ☐☐☐☐☐☐ 28-33/

[Juvenile period only.]

800. During this period were your parents:

married,...................... 1 35/
not married, or.............. 2
divorced?..................... 3
SEPARATED..................... 4
WIDOWED....................... 5
BOTH DECEASED................. 6
DON'T KNOW.................... 7

801. Would you describe your parents' financial status at that time as:

upper,........................ 1 36/
middle, or.................... 2
lower?........................ 3

802. Was your mother or father ever convicted of a felony?

YES........................... 1 37/
NO............................ 2
DON'T KNOW.................... 3

803. Were any of your brothers or sisters ever convicted of an adult felony?

NA............................ 1 38/
YES........................... 2
NO............................ 3
DON'T KNOW.................... 4

804. During this time, were any of your family members incarcerated?

YES........................... 1 39/
NO............................ 2
DON'T KNOW.................... 3

CARD 01

805. About how many times did you move prior to this time?

☐☐☐ 40-42/

806. At what age did you leave your parents' home?

☐☐ 43-44/

807. Why did you leave your parents' home?

____

____

____

____ ☐ 45/

808. How was your school attendance before you stopped going altogether? Were you:

a good attender,.............. 1 46/
occasionally absent, or....... 2
habitual truant?.............. 3

809. How old were you when you committed your first serious offense, that is, a crime for which you could easily have been arrested?

☐☐ 47-48/

[End of questions pertaining only to juvenile period.]

CARD 01

[Questions 1101-1311 repeated for all three career periods.]

CARD 02

1101. Who did you live with six months prior to your landmark incarceration (or, if juvenile period, before age 18 if no juvenile incarceration)? Did you live? (CIRCLE ONE)

with both parents,.................................. 01 6-7/
in a foster or group home, or...................... 02
with a friend?..................................... 03
ALONE.. 04
MILITARY... 05
TRANSIENT.. 06
ONE PARENT... 07
RELATIVES.. 08
SPOUSE, CHILDREN, OR BOTH.......................... 09
CHILDREN... 10
OTHER.. 11
(SPECIFY): ______________________ ☐☐

1102. How would you characterize the relationship you had with your family? (CIRCLE ONE)

NOT APPLICABLE..................................... 1 8/
FAVORABLE.. 2
UNFAVORABLE.. 3
NO INTEREST.. 4
NO CONTACT WITH THEM............................... 5
OTHER.. 6
(SPECIFY): ______________________ ☐

1103. What was your usual source of income during this time? Were you:

working at a job................................... 1 9/
on welfare,...(GO TO Q.1108)....................... 2
using spouse's, relatives' or friends' income,... (GO TO Q.1108)....................................... 3
involved in illegal activities, or...(GO TO Q.1108). 4
getting Workmen's Compensation, Social Security and/or Disability?...(GO TO Q.1108)............... 5
OTHER...(GO TO Q.1108)............................. 6
(SPECIFY) ______________________ ☐

.CARD 02

1104. What kinds of jobs did you have during this period? CIRCLE ONE.

ODD JOBS	01	*10-11/*
BUSINESS	02	
TRADE	03	
FACTORY	04	
RESTAURANT/BAR	05	
SALES	06	
CONSTRUCTION	07	
MILITARY	08	
SELF-EMPLOYED	09	
OTHER	10	

(SPECIFY): __________ ☐☐

1105. Did you usually work:

part time,	1	*12/*
full time, or	2	
off and on?	3	

1106. What percent of the time were you employed at the above job?

☐☐☐ *13-15/*

1107. About how much did you earn per week when you were working?

LESS THAN $50	1	*16/*
$51-100	2	
$101-200	3	
$201-300	4	
MORE THAN $300	5	

1108. How would you characterize your outlook on life at that time? Were you:

hostile, assaultive,	1	*17/*
depressed,	2	
just getting by, or	3	
happy, easygoing?	4	

CARD 02

1109-
1119. I am going to read a list of things that some people consider important. I want you to tell me how important these things were to you at that time. Were they not important, somewhat unimportant, somewhat important, or very important?

	NOT IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT UNIMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	
having money to spend.......	1	2	3	4	*18/*
having friends..............	1	2	3	4	*19/*
being respected.............	1	2	3	4	*20/*
excitement and kicks........	1	2	3	4	*21/*
having a steady job.........	1	2	3	4	*22/*
your family.................	1	2	3	4	*23/*
interesting or satisfying work......................	1	2	3	4	*24/*
having good-looking women...	1	2	3	4	*25/*
liking yourself.............	1	2	3	4	*26/*
staying out of trouble with the law..............	1	2	3	4	*27/*
having a good time..........	1	2	3	4	*28/*

1120-
1130. In each of these things, how satisfied were you at that time? Were you very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied, or very satisfied?

	VERY DISSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED	
money....................	-2	-1	01	02	*29-30/*
friends..................	-2	-1	01	02	*31-32/*
respect..................	-2	-1	01	02	*33-34/*
amount of excitement and kicks..............	-2	-1	01	02	*35-36/*
steadiness of job........	-2	-1	01	02	*37-38/*
family...................	-2	-1	01	02	*39-40/*
type of work.............	-2	-1	01	02	*41-42/*
women....................	-2	-1	01	02	*43-44/*
yourself.................	-2	-1	01	02	*45-46/*
ability to stay out of trouble with the law...	-2	-1	01	02	*47-48/*
having a good time.......	-2	-1	01	02	*49-50/*

1131. During this total career period, were you involved in serious illegal activities, that is, crimes for which you could have been prosecuted?

YES...(GO TO Q.1132)........... 1 *51/*
NO...(GO TO NEXT CAREER PERIOD) 2

CARD 02

Now I am going to read you a list of criminal offenses. Please tell me whether you did any of these during the entire career period, up to your landmark incarceration (or up to age 18 if juvenile period and no juvenile incarceration).

	1. AUTO THEFT	2. PURSE SNATCHING	3. THEFT OVER $50	4. BURGLARY
1132-1140.	YES NO...000 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐☐ *52-54/*	YES NO...000 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐☐ *55-57/*	YES NO...000 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐☐ *58-60/*	YES NO...000 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐☐ *61-63/*
1141-1146.	*CARD 03*	What was your usual take per job? $ ☐☐☐☐ *6-9/*	What was your usual take per job? $ ☐☐☐☐ *10-13/*	What was your usual take per job? $ ☐☐☐☐ *14-17/*
1147-1155.	Were you ever arrested? YES NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *30-31/*	Were you ever arrested? YES NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *32-33/*	Were you ever arrested? YES NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *34-35/*	Were you ever arrested? YES NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *36-37/*
1156-1164.	Were you ever convicted? YES NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *48-49/*	Were you ever convicted? YES NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *50-51/*	Were you ever convicted? YES NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *52-53/*	Were you ever convicted? YES NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *54-55/*

CARD 02/03

5. ROBBERY	6. AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	7. FORGERY/NSF	8. DRUG SALES	9. RAPE
YES ↓ NO...000 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐☐ *64-66/*	YES ↓ NO...000 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐☐ *67-69/*	YES ↓ NO...000 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐☐ *70-72/*	YES ↓ NO...000 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐☐ *73-75/*	YES ↓ NO...000 (GO TO NEXT Q.) Can you tell me how many times? ☐☐☐ *76-78/*
What was your usual take per job? $ ☐☐☐☐ *18-21/*		What was your usual take per job? $ ☐☐☐☐ *22-25/*	What was your usual take per job? $ ☐☐☐☐ *26-29/*	
Were you ever arrested? YES ↓ NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *38-39/*	Were you ever arrested? YES ↓ NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *40-41/*	Were you ever arrested? YES ↓ NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *42-43/*	Were you ever arrested? YES ↓ NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *44-45/*	Were you ever arrested? YES ↓ NO....00 (GO TO NEXT Q.) How many times? ☐☐ *45-47/*
Were you ever convicted? YES ↓ NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *56-57/*	Were you ever convicted? YES ↓ NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *58-59/*	Were you ever convicted? YES ↓ NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *60-61/*	Were you ever convicted? YES ↓ NO....00 (GO TO NEXT CRIME) How many times? ☐☐ *62-63/*	Were you ever convicted? YES ↓ NO....00 (GO TO NEXT Q.) How many times? ☐☐ *64-65/*
1165. Did you use a weapon? YES ↓ NO....00 How many times? ☐☐ *66-67/*				

CARD 02/03

CARD 04

1166. Which of these things did you start out doing?

OFFICE USE

____ ☐ 6/

1167. Which did you do next?

OFFICE USE

____ ☐ 7/

1168. What did you do after that?

OFFICE USE

____ ☐ 8/

1169. Which did you do next?

OFFICE USE

____ ☐ 9/

1170. What did you do after that?

OFFICE USE

____ ☐ 10/

1171. During this total career period was there any time when you were not involved in criminal activities? Not involved means unwilling to commit crimes.

YES...(ASK Q.1172 AND Q.1173).. 1 11/
NO...(GO TO Q.1174)............ 2

1172. A. IF YES: How long did it last?

MONTHS ☐☐ 12-13/

1173. B. Why? ____________________________________

____________________________________ OFFICE USE

____________________________________ ☐ 14/

1174. What was the main reason for taking part in illegal activities? Was it: (CIRCLE ONE)

hostility, revenge,................................. 1 15/
the thrill of it, ATTENTION, STATUS,.................2
money for drugs, alcohol,........................... 3
MONEY FOR women,.................................... 4
MONEY FOR rent, self-support,....................... 5
MONEY FOR family support,........................... 6
no other alternative,............................... 7
peer influence,..................................... 8
DON'T KNOW.. 9

CARD 04

1175-1182. Did any of the following factors contribute to the crimes you committed during the six month period prior to your incarceration? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

marital/family difficulties,	1	*16/*
loss of employment,	2	*17/*
heavy debts,	3	*18/*
influence of friends,	4	*19/*
gang activities, or	5	*20/*
under the influence of drugs or alcohol while committing the crime?	6	*21/*
NOT APPLICABLE	7	*22/*
OTHER	8	*23/*
(SPECIFY) ______________________ ☐		

1183. Was your criminal behavior mostly influenced by your friends or the people you were going around with, or was it mostly just what you felt like doing?

PRIMARILY SELF-DIRECTED	1	*24/*
PRIMARILY PEER-DIRECTED	2	
UNSURE, DON'T KNOW	3	

1184. For what did you use the money from your crime? (CIRCLE ONE)

HIGH LIVING	1	*25/*
SELF-SUPPORT (RENT, FOOD)	2	
FAMILY SUPPORT	3	
DRUGS, DRINKING	4	
GAMBLING, DEBTS	5	
OTHER	6	
(SPECIFY) ______________________ ☐		

1185. Did you usually plan the crime:

alone,	1	*26/*
with one partner, or	2	
with more than one partner?	3	

1186. Did you usually commit the crime:

alone,	1	*27/*
with one partner, or	2	
with more than one partner?	3	

CARD 04

1187. Did you usually commit the crimes with the same partner or partners?

YES	1	28/
NO	2	

1188. Why do you think you were not arrested? (CIRCLE ONE FOR MAIN REASON)

N/A (I.E., ALWAYS ARRESTED)	01	29-30/
POLICE INEFFECTIVE	02	
YOUR SKILL	03	
CHANGED MO, YOUR IMAGINATION	04	
OFFENSE UNKNOWN TO POLICE	05	
VICTIM WOULD NOT COOPERATE WITH POLICE	06	
WHY? ______________________	☐☐	
VICTIM INTIMIDATION	07	
YOUR MOBILITY	08	
LEGAL MANEUVERING (E.G., CONTINUANCES)	09	
OTHER	10	
(SPECIFY) ______________________	☐☐	

1189. During this time, were you ever arrested but not convicted?

YES...(ASK Q.1190)	1	31/
NO	2	

1190. A. IF YES: Why not convicted?

INNOCENT	1	32/
WEAK CASE PREPARED BY POLICE	2	
VICTIM REFUSED TO COOPERATE WITH POLICE	3	
GOOD DEFENSE	4	
OTHER	5	
(SPECIFY) ______________________	☐	

CARD 04

1191-
1196. What kinds of people helped you in your illegal activities during this time? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

no one	1	33/
fence (receiver and concealer)	2	34/
lawyer	3	35/
"square" as a buyer or informer	4	36/
drug supplier	5	37/
other? (SPECIFY)________________	6 ☐	38/

1197-
1208. During the six-month period what kind of planning did you usually do prior to committing your property crimes? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

Staked out the location; learned when it was most crowded	01	39-40/
Visited location several times	02	41-42/
Developed new identity (checking account, etc.)	03	43-44/
Got a car; switched license plates, etc	04	45-46/
Obtained a disguise (e.g., fake mustache)	05	47-48/
Found out if the place had a burglar alarm installed	06	49-50/
Found out how much money was likely to be in the store at different times of the day	07	51-52/
Read books about how different types of crimes are committed	08	53-54/
Planned an escape route	09	55-56/
Rehearsed the crime before actually committing it	10	57-58/
Found out when police were likely to be in that area	11	59-60/
Other, describe ________________ ________________	12 ☐	61-62/

CARD 04

1209. Before you committed the crime for which you were sentenced, how concerned were you that you might get caught? (CIRCLE ONE)

VERY CONCERNED.................	1	*63/*
SOMEWHAT CONCERNED.............	2	
LITTLE CONCERNED...............	3	
NOT CONCERNED, DIDN'T CARE... (ASK Q.1210).................	4	

1210. A. Why not?

HAD NO ALTERNATIVE.............	1	*64/*
NOT AFRAID OF PRISON...........	2	
NOT THINKING (ALCOHOL, DRUGS)..	3	
OTHER..........................	4	
(SPECIFY) ______________	☐	

1211. Were any of your victims injured?

YES...(GO TO Q.1212)...........	1	*65/*
NO....(GO TO Q.1213)...........	2	

1212. IF YES: Were they injured:

seriously, or..................	1	*66/*
slightly?......................	2	

1213. IF NO: Would you have injured them:

to complete the crime,.........	1	*67/*
in self-defense, or............	2	
not for any reason?............	3	

1214. Where were most of your criminal activities committed?

in your immediate neighborhood,.....................	1	*68/*
in neighboring cities,..............................	2	
all over the country,..(ASK Q.1215)................	3	
IN ONE CITY,..	4	
THROUGHOUT THE STATE?...............................	5	

1215. A. About how many states were involved?

☐☐ *69-70/*

CARD 04

1216. When you committed crimes during this period, were you under the influence of:

Alcohol,....................... 1 *71/*
Drugs, or...................... 2
Both alcohol and drugs, or..... 3
Neither?...(GO TO Q.1218)...... 4

1217. Do you think their use had anything to do with your committing these crimes or not?

NO............................. 1 *72/*
A LITTLE....................... 2
SOME........................... 3
A LOT.......................... 4

1218-1239. I'm going to read a list of criminal offenses. Which of these offenses would you have been willing to commit, considering the risks and the take? This does not mean that you did commit these offenses but that you would have been willing to commit them during the period if given the opportunity. Would you have been willing to commit? READ (ITEM) Why?

				Reason				*CARD 05*
	YES	NO		TAKE	RISK	PERSONAL PREFERENCE	SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE	
A. Small store robbery (e.g., liquor).........	1	2	*6/*	1	2	3	4	*7/*
B. Large store robbery (e.g., department, grocery)...............	1	2	*8/*	1	2	3	4	*9/*
C. Gas station robbery....	1	2	*10/*	1	2	3	4	*11/*
D. Bank robbery...........	1	2	*12/*	1	2	3	4	*13/*
E. Taxicab robbery........	1	2	*14/*	1	2	3	4	*15/*
F. Street robbery.........	1	2	*16/*	1	2	3	4	*17/*
G. Burglary...............	1	2	*18/*	1	2	3	4	*19/*
H. Forgery................	1	2	*20/*	1	2	3	4	*21/*
I. Passing worthless checks.................	1	2	*22/*	1	2	3	4	*23/*
J. Selling drugs..........	1	2	*24/*	1	2	3	4	*25/*
K. Other..................	1	2	*26/*	1	2	3	4	*27/*

(SPECIFY) ____________

____

CARD 04/05

1240. If you had an opportunity to steal a sum of money, without getting hurt, with a 50% chance of getting caught and receiving a two-year prison sentence, how large would the take have to be before you would do the job?

$ ☐☐☐,☐☐☐

OR

NO AMOUNT COULD HAVE MADE
ME DO IT................ NNNNNN — 28-33/

1241. Now suppose you had the same situation but with a 50% chance of getting caught and receiving a five-year prison sentence, how large would the take have to be before you would do the job?

$ ☐☐☐,☐☐☐

OR

NO AMOUNT COULD HAVE MADE
ME DO IT................ NNNNNN — 34-39/

1242. If you had a 10% chance of getting caught and a two-year sentence if caught, what would the take have to be?

$ ☐☐☐,☐☐☐

OR

NO AMOUNT COULD HAVE MADE
ME DO IT................ NNNNNN — 40-45/

1243. What if there was a 10% chance of getting caught but a five-year sentence if caught?

$ ☐☐☐,☐☐☐ 46-51/

1244-
1248. Are you likely to lose your temper because of: (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

Hassling by the police,.............................	1	52/
Cheating by a crime partner,........................	2	53/
Insults by a stranger,..............................	3	54/
Girlfriend's running around, or.....................	4	55/
Other?... (SPECIFY) ______________________________ ☐	5	56/

CARD 05

1249. Did you ever seriously lose your temper during this time?

NO, NEVER	1	57/
SOMETIMES	2	
YES, OFTEN	3	

1250. About how many fights did you have during this time?

☐☐☐ 58-60/

1251. In how many of these was a weapon involved?

☐☐☐ 61-63/

1252-1257. Who were these fights with? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

Family	1	64/
Friends	2	65/
Crime partners	3	66/
Strangers	4	67/
Police	5	68/
Other	6	69/

1258. Were you ever injured in any of these fights?

YES	1	70/
NO	2	

1259. Was the other party ever injured in any of these fights?

YES	1	71/
NO	2	

CARD 05

1260-1266. Now I have a few questions about your landmark offense.

How were you caught for this offense? (CIRCLE ONE)

AT OR FLEEING THE SCENE OF CRIME....... 1 72/
BY A DETECTIVE.......................... 2
WITH THE LOOT........................... 3
BY SURRENDERING......................... 4
THROUGH ARREST FOR ANOTHER CRIME........5
THROUGH INFORMANT....................... 6
OTHER................................... 7
(SPECIFY)____________________ ☐

1267. How long after the crime were you arrested?

WEEKS ☐☐☐ 73-75/

1268. Who represented you in court?

PUBLIC DEFENDER................ 1 76/
PRIVATE COUNSEL................ 2
COURT-APPOINTED COUNSEL........ 3
NONE........................... 4
SELF........................... 5
UNKNOWN........................ 6

1269. Do you think that your sentence was about the same as those of other defendants in similar cases, or different?

SAME...(GO TO Q.1272).......... 1 77/
DIFFERENT...(ASK Q.1270)....... 2

1270. A. IF DIFFERENT: Do you think that your sentence was much lighter, somewhat lighter, more severe, or much more severe?

MUCH LIGHTER................... 1 78/
SOMEWHAT LIGHTER............... 2
MORE SEVERE.................... 3
MUCH MORE SEVERE............... 4

1271. Why was it different?

____

____ ☐ 79/

CARD 05

CARD 06

1272. While you were institutionalized for this offense, how much difficulty did you have in adjusting?

A LOT...(ASK Q.1273)........... 1 6/
SOME...(ASK Q.1273)............ 2
NONE...(GO TO Q.1274).......... 3

1273. A. IF DIFFICULT: Why? CIRCLE ONE.

YOUR BEHAVIOR.................. 1 7/
GUARDS......................... 2
OTHER INMATES.................. 3
PROGRAMS....................... 4
OTHER.......................... 5
(SPECIFY)________________ ☐

1274-1279. During this time, did you participate in: (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

vocational training,............................... 1 8/
individual counseling,............................. 2 9/
group counseling,.................................. 3 10/
educational programs,.............................. 4 11/
drug and alcohol programs, or...................... 5 12/
other programs?.................................... 6
(SPECIFY)________________________________ ☐ 13 /

1280. A. Were any of the programs useful?

YES...(ASK Q.1281)............ 1 14/
NO...(GO TO Q.1287)........... 2

1281-1286. B. Which programs were useful? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

vocational training................................ 1 15/
individual counseling.............................. 2 16/
group counseling................................... 3 17/
educational programs............................... 4 18/
drug and alcohol programs.......................... 5 19/
other.. 6
(SPECIFY) ________________________________ ☐ 20/

CARD 06

1287. Why did you participate?

IT WAS REQUIRED................	1	21/
SINCERELY HOPED TO BENEFIT.....	2	
LEARNED TO PLAY THE GAME, FAKE PARTICIPATION...........	3	
THOUGHT IT WOULD HELP RELEASE..	4	
OTHER..........................	5	

(SPECIFY) ________________ ☐

1288-1294. I am now going to ask you about your release from the institution.

When you were released from prison, what did you need most? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.) Can you tell me which of these were the most important?

	NEED TO TAKE CARE OF		MOST IMPORTANT	
A place to live..................	1	22/	1	29/
A job............................	2	23/	2	
Psychological or family counseling.....................	3	24/	3	
Drug/alcohol rehabilitation program........................	4	25/	4	
Criminal contacts to continue illegal activities.............	5	26/	5	
Someone who cared about me.......	6	27/	6	
Other............................	7	28/	7	

(SPECIFY)____________________

1295. What did you think you would do when released from prison? (PROBE FOR REALISTIC ANSWERS)

COMMIT CRIMINAL ACTS AND HOPE FOR BETTER LUCK......	1	30/
COMMIT CRIMINAL ACTS BUT PLAN MORE CAREFULLY.......	2	31/
COMMIT CRIMINAL ACTS BUT LESS DANGEROUS OFFENSES...	3	32/
COMMIT CRIMINAL ACTS BUT LESS FREQUENTLY...........	4	33/
STOP CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES BUT NOT GET A JOB RIGHT AWAY...	5	34/
GET A JOB AND NOT COMMIT CRIMINAL ACTS.............	6	35/

CARD 06

1296. If I had asked you upon your release to tell me where you would be in three months, what would you have said?

Still employed	1	*36/*
Back involved in crime	2	
In jail	3	
On welfare	4	
Other	5	
(SPECIFY)________________	☐	

1297. During the three months following your release, where did you live the majority of time? (CIRCLE ONE)

with both parents,	01	*37-38/*
in a foster or group home, or	02	
with a friend?	03	
ALONE	04	
MILITARY	05	
TRANSIENT	06	
ONE PARENT	07	
RELATIVES	08	
SPOUSE, CHILDREN, OR BOTH	09	
CHILDREN	10	
OTHER	11	
(SPECIFY)____________________________	☐	

1298. Were you released on parole?

YES	1	*39/*
NO...(GO TO Q.1301)	2	

1299. How strictly were you monitored by your parole officer?

Very strictly	1	*40/*
Somewhat strictly	2	
Not very strictly	3	
Not at all	4	

CARD 06

1300. Did his/her supervision in any way affect your involvement in crime?

ENCOURAGED OR PROVOKED INVOLVEMENT..................	1	41/
NO EFFECT......................	2	
DISCOURAGED OR HINDERED INVOLVEMENT..................	3	

1301. How seriously did you look for work after your release?

VERY SERIOUSLY...(MORE THAN 3 MONTHS).............	1	42/
SOMEWHAT SERIOUSLY...(1-3 MONTHS)..................	2	
NOT VERY SERIOUSLY...(1 WEEK TO 1 MONTH)...........	3	
NOT AT ALL...(LESS THAN 1 WEEK)....................	4	

1302. How long did it take you to find work?

WEEKS	☐☐	43-44/
OR		
DIDN'T FIND WORK.............	DD	

1303. Do you think you were being monitored by the police because of your record?

YES...(ASK Q.1304).............	1	45/
NO.............................	2	

1304. A. IF YES: How much do you think you were being watched by the police?

A LOT..........................	1	46/
SOME...........................	2	
A LITTLE.......................	3	

1305-
1309. At this time would any of the following factors have deterred your return to crime? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

Probability of longer sentence.....................	1	47/
Harsher treatment while in prison..................	2	48/
Stricter parole supervision........................	3	49/
Certainty of being caught..........................	4	50/
Other..	5	51/
(SPECIFY) ______________________________	☐	

1310. Estimate how long after your release it took to get back involved in crime.

WEEKS	☐☐	52-53/

1311. Estimate the amount of time that you were committing illegal activities before you were arrested again.

WEEKS	☐☐	54-55/

[End of questions pertaining to all three career periods.]

[Adult period only.]

Now I have a few more questions about your landmark offense:

4000. Did the prosecutor ever threaten to charge you with "prior offenses" so that your sentence might be lengthened?

YES...(ASK Q.4001).............. 1 *42/*
NO.............................. 2

4001. A. Were you formally charged with "priors"?

YES...(ASK Q.4002).............. 1 *43/*
NO...(GO TO Q.4004)............. 2

4002. B. As far as you know, were the charges:

dropped in plea bargaining,..... 1 *44/*
not considered in sentencing, or. 2
used to increase sentence?...... 3
DON'T KNOW...................... 4

4004. Did the prosecutor ever threaten to allege that you were legally an habitual offender so that your sentence might be lengthened?

YES...(ASK Q.4005).............. 1 *45/*
NO.............................. 2

4005. A. Were you formally charged as an habitual offender?

YES...(ASK Q.4006).............. 1 *46/*
NO.............................. 2

4006. B. As far as you know, were the charges:

dropped in plea bargaining,..... 1 *47/*
not considered in sentencing, or. 2
used to increase sentence?...... 3
DON'T KNOW...................... 4

Appendix B

PREVIOUS STUDIES OF CRIMINAL CAREERS

The desirability of studying the criminal behavior of offenders throughout their criminal careers has long been recognized. As early as 1893, Otto Kobner declared that "correct statistics of offenders can be developed only by a study of the total life histories of individuals."[93] Later, Georg von Mayr stated that "a deeper insight into the statistics of criminality is made possible by the disclosure of developmental regularities which must be sought through a study of the manner in which criminality develops in the course of a human lifetime."[94] More recently, Donald Gibbons has insisted that "criminological attention must turn away from the study of crime and criminals to the examination of various types of role careers in criminality."[95]

Roebuck suggests that the study of criminal career development is necessary in criminological research for several reasons:

> (a) There is no adequate, general theory of criminal behavior; (b) behavioral scientists are concerned with and can only explain patterned behavior; (c) many adjudicated offenders demonstrate a patterning of offense behavior in their criminal careers; offenders with similar offense behavior patterns are likely to share certain social and psychological attributes which differentiate them from offenders with other offense behavior patterns; (d) though behavioral and social-psychological changes occur in the development of criminal careers, such changes are limited and identifiable; it is possible to define definite and stable criminal career patterns; offenders tend to close in on specific offense behaviors; (e) adjudicated offenders may be classified on the basis of legal categories of offense behavior; (f) the etiological process that leads to one kind of criminal career differs from that which leads to another criminal career; (g) criminal behavior results from multiple causation; and (h) an interdisciplinary approach is necessary to any typological approach.[96]

Three approaches are reflected in the literature on the criminal careers of serious habitual offenders. The first approach adopts the offender's perspective and results in biographies, "autobiographies," and case studies. An example is *The Professional Thief*, by Sutherland.[97] The second approach analyzes official criminal justice records. An example is *Delinquency in a Birth Cohort*, by Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin.[98] The third approach consists of conceptual or theoretical efforts—usually grounded in empirical research—to explain the persistence of criminal behavior. An excellent example is *Criminal Behavior Systems*, by Clinard and

---

[93] O. Kobner, "Die Methode einer wissenschaftlichen Ruckfallsstatistik als Grundlage einer Reform der Kriminalstatistik," *Zeitschrift gesamter Strafrechtswissenschaft*, Vol. 13, 1893, p. 670.

[94] Georg von Mayr, "Statistik und Gesselschaftslehre," *Moralstatistik mit Einschluss der Kriminalstatistik*, Vol. 3, Mohr, Tubingen, Germany, 1917, p. 425.

[95] Donald C. Gibbons, *Society, Crime, and Criminal Careers*, 2d ed., Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973, p. 13.

[96] J. Roebuck, *Criminal Typology*, Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1965, p. 16.

[97] E. H. Sutherland, *The Professional Thief*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1937.

[98] M. Wolfgang, R. Figlio, and T. Sellin, *Delinquency in a Birth Cohort*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1972.

Quinney.[99] The brief review below touches only on the aspects of this literature that relate directly to our study.

FIRST APPROACH: THE OFFENDER'S PERSPECTIVE

What offenders say about their experiences reveals a great deal about how the criminal justice system operates, how much it deters criminal behavior, and why people persist in such behavior. As Albert Morris said, "Even when they are lacking in penetration or sincerity, the verbalizations of criminals may have a diagnostic value as great as other overt behavior."[100]

Clinard and Quinney elaborate on this point: "A final way of looking at the social nature of professional crime is through the language of the offender. . . . The argot used reflects the attitudes of the professional toward the law, himself, the victims, other criminals, and society in general."[101] Career histories contribute to criminology by giving the researcher insight into criminality as a dynamic, ongoing process.

The Inception of a Criminal Career

Life histories reveal inner strivings, motivations, barriers, and other personal attributes and social events that move the offender to consciously adopt certain criminal behavior patterns. An example is the classic case study of "Sidney" by Clifford R. Shaw, *The Natural History of a Delinquent Career.*[102] Sidney grew up in a poor and unhappy family, became a truant, ran away from home several times, and began petty stealing to support himself. He was arrested, committed to a boys' reform school, and he served five years before the age of 16. Later, serving time for being a runaway at a house of corrections, he picked up "bad thoughts from bad associates," learned new techniques of stealing, and progressed from habitual runaway to criminal. Being treated as a criminal in these institutions reinforced his view of himself as a criminal. When released, he found himself typecast as an ex-convict with no plans and no prospects. As Shaw comments:

> During the course of his career in delinquency, from the time he was seven to seventeen years of age, Sidney was arrested at least sixteen times, was brought to court on petitions alleging truancy or delinquency ten times, and received seven commitments to four different correctional institutions. His delinquencies became increasingly serious as he grew older, beginning as petty stealing in the neighborhood and truancy from school, and progressing to more serious crimes as holdup with a gun and rape. . . . The holdup and rape offenses . . . were the natural consequence of a long chain of delinquent experiences. The attitudes, habits, and philosophy of life

---

[99] M. Clinard and R. Quinney, *Criminal Behavior Systems: A Typology*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1967.

[100] Cited by David M. Peterson and Marcello Truzzi, *Criminal Life: Views from the Inside*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1972, p. viii.

[101] Pp. 254-255.

[102] Clifford R. Shaw, *The Natural History of a Delinquent Career*, Albert Saifer, Philadelphia, 1951. An earlier study by Shaw is *The Jack Roller: A Delinquent Boy's Own Story*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1930.

> underlying these latter crimes were undoubtedly built up in the course of the earlier experiences in delinquency.[103]

Peer pressure, poor relationships with parents, and engaging in petty theft helped initiate the criminal careers of Sidney and others observed at the juvenile level.

Some autobiographies have presented the picture of a more rational and calculated entry into a career of crime, particularly at the adult level. These people weighed the costs of a crime (time, energy, stress) against its benefits (material rewards without the tedium of employment) and decided in favor of crime. John Bartlow Martin's criminal, "Eugene," for instance, is attractive, intelligent, personable, and comes from a noncriminal family. He chooses a life of crime, from among other alternatives open to him. because of the abundant opportunities for profit.[104] Among the crimes to which he confesses in his autobiography are petty and grand larceny, burglary, safe-blowing, arson, robbery, bootlegging, and jury tampering.

Einstadter studied twenty-five professional armed robbers and concluded that career robbers are persons who failed to develop early commitments to adult roles and values.[105] The early histories of Einstadter's robbers are all marked by estranging or anomic experiences. They changed the robber's view of society and his place in it and may have led him to criminal behavior. Alienating experiences in childhood (lack of parental guidance, early commitment to a reformatory, life of poverty or deprivation) or in adulthood (divorce, loss of job) may cause a redirection of life toward criminality. Several noted criminologists support Einstadter's view. Many believe that crime is essentially the solution of personal problems at a childish level of conduct, either because basic attitudes have never developed beyond that level or because the person has regressed to childish attitudes.

Crime As a Profession

The publication of Edwin H. Sutherland's *The Professional Thief* in 1937 provided the first systematic analysis of crime pursued as a "profession." It still stands as the most comprehensive study of the nature and complexity of criminal career development. Using a biographical approach, Sutherland asserted that there is a profession of crime and that it has an occupational structure similar to many other vocational pursuits. By his definition, "professional" criminals commit crimes in a primarily nonviolent manner, with a high degree of skill, and for strictly monetary gain. Like other professionals, these criminals also acquire skills, develop role models, and accept consistent self-images. The list below paraphrases Sutherland's conclusions.

1. The professional thief makes a regular business of stealing. It is his occupation and means of livelihood, and he devotes his entire working time and energy to stealing.
2. The professional thief operates with proficiency. He has a body of skills and knowledge that is utilized in the planning and execution of his work. He has contempt for the amateur thief.

---

[103] Shaw, *Delinquent Career*, p. 226.

[104] John Bartlow Martin, *My Life in Crime: The Autobiography of a Professional Criminal*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1952.

[105] W. J. Einstadter, *Armed Robbery: A Career Study in Perspective*, University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1966.

3. The professional thief is a graduate of a developmental process that includes the acquisition of specialized attitudes, knowledge, skills, and experience.
4. The professional thief makes crime his way of life. He organizes his life around his criminal pursuits and develops a philosophy regarding his activities and profession.
5. The professional thief identifies himself with the world of crime. There he is a member of an exclusive fraternity that extends friendship, understanding, sympathy, congeniality, security, recognition, and respect.
6. The professional thief is able to steal for long periods of time without going to prison. He commits crimes in a manner that reduces the risks of apprehension, and he is able to effectively cope with confrontations with the criminal justice system.

SECOND APPROACH: CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE

Several analyses of data pertaining to criminal behavior during the course of a criminal career have afforded insight into the relationship between age and criminality, the dependence of crime on sociodemographic variables, and the phenomenon of crime switching.

Age and Criminality

National statistics indicate that crime is disproportionately an activity of the young. For many crimes, the peak age of criminality is below 24 years.[106] According to national arrest statistics, young people 15-17 years old have the highest rate of burglary, larceny, and auto theft arrests. For these three offenses, 15-year-olds are arrested more often than are persons of any other age, with 16-year-olds a close second. For crimes of violence, the peak ages for arrest are 18 to 20, followed closely by 21 to 24. On the other hand, offenders older than 24 comprise the great majority arrested for fraud, embezzlement, gambling, drunkenness, offenses against the family, and vagrancy.[107]

Analysts have hypothesized that the observed decline in criminality with age is related to "unfavorable, progressive changes correlated with the passage of time, becoming apparent after maturity, and terminating in the death of the individual." In a person leading a "straight" life, these changes may manifest themselves in a tendency to lose vitality and interest in many activities, including a job.[108] The person involved in a criminal career may start to feel "burned out," and he may decide to reduce and eventually leave criminal activity and its hazards. The decline in criminality with age may also be due to the incapacitating effect of longer sentences that older recidivists are likely to receive.

---

[106] See U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reports for the United States, 1975*, Washington, D.C., 1976; The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society*, Washington, D.C., 1967.

[107] *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society*, p. 44.

[108] Mark E. Adams and Clyde B. Vedder, "Age and Crime: Medical and Sociologic Characteristics of Prisoners over Fifty," *Geriatrics*, April 1961.

The research literature has not elucidated a precise relationship between age and criminality. In 1940, Sellin observed that "the research student who is in pursuit of an answer to the relationship of age to crime is doomed to disappointment."[109] In 1959, following a review of age-related theories of crime and delinquency, Wooton concluded that there has been little advance since Sellin's analysis.[110] Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin suggested that "the relationship between age and delinquency has not been adequately explored, partly because most researchers have considered age an antecedent condition rather than a measure of time."[111]

Quetelet, who conducted one of the earliest statistical studies of the relationship between age and crime, computed crime rates for various age groups in France. He corroborated the view that criminals "burn out," concluding that there is a "penchant for crime which seems to develop by reason of the intensity of man's physical vitality and passion and attains its maximum about the age of *twenty-five* when physical development has been completed."[112]

Quetelet's observations are supported by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck's longitudinal studies of the effect of aging on criminality. The Gluecks statistically analyzed the criminal careers of 500 reformatory inmates and 1000 juvenile delinquents whom they had followed for 10 years. After examining a large number of factors, they concluded that "aging is the only factor which emerges as a significant factor in the reformative process."[113] They attributed the improvement in conduct with increasing age to a "trend toward improvement in all aspects of the activities of these men. . . . This proceeds until the *age of 35-36*. Those who have not reformed by the age of *thirty-six* are not likely to do so thereafter, since improvement in almost every aspect drops markedly beyond the 30-35 year age span."[114] The Gluecks found that some offenders settled down earlier than others, and they explained the persistence of criminal conduct as mental abnormality.

In a later study of changes in the conduct of 1000 juvenile delinquents over a fifteen-year period, the Gluecks introduced the "age of onset" theory in their hypothesis that "abandonment of criminal conduct does not occur at any specific chronologic age-level but rather, after the passage of a certain length of time from the point of first expression of indefinite delinquent trends."[115]

As evidence, the Gluecks cited the fact that over the years an increasing number of the 1000 juvenile delinquents dropped out of sight or became less serious offenders. They found that if the acts of delinquency began very early in a boy's life, they were abandoned relatively early in his manhood, providing that mental abnormalities did not counteract the natural maturation. The Gluecks associate with maturation greater powers of reflection, inhibition, postponement of immediate desires for more legitimate ones later, and the power to learn from experience.

---

[109] Thorsten Sellin, *The Criminality of Youth*, American Law Institute, Philadelphia, 1940, p. 110.

[110] Barbara Wooton, *Social Science and Social Pathology*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1959, pp. 157-172.

[111] P. 208.

[112] A. Quetelet, *Recherches sur le Penchant au Crime Aux Différents Ages*, 2d ed. Havez, Brussels, 1833, p. 75, quoted in Thorsten Sellin, "Maturing Out of Crime: Recidivism and Maturation," *National Probation and Parole Association Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1971.

[113] Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck, *Later Criminal Careers*, The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1937, p. 105.

[114] Ibid., pp. 122-123.

[115] Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck, *Juvenile Delinquents Grown Up*, The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1940, p. 167.

Sociodemographic Variables and Crime

Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin, among others, have shown that persons of lower socioeconomic status, racial minority, and lower educational attainment tend to commit more crimes than other people.[116] Of the total birth cohort they studied, 35 percent became delinquent, that is, had at least one contact with the police for something other than a traffic violation. Of the 10,214 cohort offenses, 8,601 (84.2 percent) were committed by the 1,862 recidivists (53.6 percent of all delinquents). Those who committed five or more offenses (627, or 18 percent of all delinquents), who were called chronic offenders, were responsible for 5,305 of all 10,214 delinquent offenses (51.9 percent).

Going further than simply describing the chronic offenders in terms of contacts with the public agencies, Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin examined the socioeconomic variables in their careers. Race differences were particularly striking: 417, or 10 percent, of the nonwhites but only 210, or 3 percent, of the whites were chronic offenders. Nonwhites committed 71 percent of all offenses committed by this group. All the murders, 91 percent of the rapes, 93 percent of the robberies, and 88 percent of the aggravated assaults were committed by nonwhites. Larcenies were committed by each racial group in proportion to its numbers in the chronic group. Lower socioeconomic status, lowest achievement in school, lowest I.Q., and similar variables of disadvantage characterized the chronic offenders. Other background variables that differentiated the chronic offenders from the others were (1) number of family moves; (2) measures of potential success in school (I.Q., retardation status, and achievement level); and (3) measures of school performance (disciplinary infractions, highest grade attained, and reason for leaving school).

Crime Switching

Do offenders tend to continue committing crimes of the same type or do they vary the types committed? Evidence of a clear trend would help type individual offenders, would facilitate an estimate of the future risk they pose to society, and would aid the choice of sentence for a convicted offender. Studies of crime switching have relied largely on the offenses reported in official records of arrest and conviction. To that extent, they may misrepresent the actual patterns among offenders, who commit many more crimes than ever appear in official records.

Two leading sources of information on offense patterns in criminal careers are the Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin study of adolescent delinquents cited above, and the National Violence Commission report based on the FBI's Careers in Crime file, which as of 1967 contained the criminal histories of 194,550 adult offenders.[117]

The Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin study did not examine patterns by individual crime types but by groups of crimes based on the FBI Index and non-Index classification.[118] A major finding was that the likelihood of committing two offenses of the same type in sequence was no greater than that of committing an offense of a different type. Within the cohort studied, second offenses were slightly more likely to be the same type as first offenses. In the transition from the second to the third offense, Index offenses were more likely to be followed by Index offenses. But it was very unlikely for a juvenile to repeat criminal homicide, forcible rape, or aggravated assault.[119]

---

[116] Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin, pp. 244-255.

[117] Cited in *Crimes of Violence: A Staff Report Submitted to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1969, Chap. 12.

[118] FBI *Uniform Crime Reports* Index crimes include criminal homicide, forcible rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny, and auto theft. Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin grouped them into the following classes: "injury" (homicide, forcible rape, aggravated assault), "theft" (robbery, burglary, larceny, auto theft), "damage" (including burglary, larceny, auto theft), and "combination" offenses involving more than one of injury, theft, and damage. Non-Index crimes were all others.

Harold F. Frum's findings about juvenile specialization in crime disagree with those of Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin. Frum, studying a more limited sample of 319 offenders, found that young people who had begun their criminal careers with property felonies tended to stay with that type of offense as adults. Particularly, forgery and burglary were sustained.[120]

Other research on adult crime switching has been at the level of individual crimes. A study by the Minnesota Board of Corrections found that for adults, an Index-crime arrest tended to be followed by another Index-crime arrest.[121] The crime-switching data available in 1967 were examined by the Science and Technology Task Force of the President's Crime Commission, which gave the following findings:

- When the prior Index offense was auto theft or larceny, the most likely subsequent Index offense was burglary; next most likely was the repetition of auto theft or larceny.
- Burglary was most likely to be followed by burglary, next most likely by larceny, and next by robbery.
- Robbery was most likely to be followed by robbery or burglary (equal probabilities) and next most likely by larceny.[122]

The National Violence Commission report's information on crime-switching was of limited scope, for it covered only four major violent crimes plus burglary and did not estimate the likelihood that an arrest for a violent crime would be followed by an arrest for a non-Index crime or by no further arrest.[123] The FBI data on which this report was based resembled those in the Minnesota Department of Corrections study. The Violence Commission found that in transitions from the first to the second offense, as well as from the second to the third, offenders initially arrested for burglary, robbery, or assault and then returning to one of the five crimes considered were much more likely to repeat the same offense than switch to another.[124] The Commission also found that:

- The probability of repeating an offense was slightly higher for the first and second arrests.
- Offenders first arrested for forcible rape were more likely to switch to burglary, assault, or robbery than to repeat.
- Those initially arrested for criminal homicide showed a relatively high

---

[119] Pp. 151-158.

[120] "Adult Criminal Offense Trends Following Juvenile Delinquency," *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*, May-June 1958, pp. 29-49.

[121] Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Crime Revisited," *Uniform Crime Reports, 1965*, pp. 29-31, cited in The President's Commission on Law Enforcement, *Science and Technology Task Force Report*, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., 1967.

[122] *Science and Technology Task Force Report*, Appendix, Table 18.

[123] *Crimes of Violence*, p. 543.

[124] Ibid., Appendix, Table 19.

> probability of later committing aggravated assault; those arrested for robbery were more likely to be arrested next for robbery, second most likely for burglary, and third most likely for aggravated assault.

There is evidence that juveniles tend to progress from less serious to more serious offenses.[125] By contrast, the evidence is scant that adult criminal careers reflect a progressive increase in the gravity of offenses committed, with the possible exception of a trend in property crimes alone. For example, adults with an arrest for larceny or auto theft appear to be most likely to be rearrested for burglary.[126]

Data for adult offenders also contrast with those for juveniles in showing a tendency for repetition of offenses such as assault, robbery, and burglary.[127] In particular, 35 percent, 38 percent, and 53 percent, respectively, of those arrested for these three offenses had one or more prior arrests for the same offense type. The percentages did not differ appreciably between black and white offenders.

Looking at the other side of the issue, the homogeneity of offenses, some studies have contended that stable patterns of criminal activity are not uncommon.[128] One study found that offenders tend to commit either violent or nonviolent crimes but not both. The weight of research evidence, however, favors the view that the homogeneous criminal career is exceedingly uncommon.[129] The contention that homogeneous criminal careers are not unusual is made less credible by the fact that it generally has been based on studies of arrest rather than conviction records. Arrest records are thought to exaggerate the homogeneity of an offender's criminal activity since police are known to arrest some suspects for new crimes on the basis of their prior arrests or modus operandi.

THIRD APPROACH: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Of particular significance in the conceptual and theoretical analysis of deviant and criminal careers are the works of Clinard and Quinney, and Gibbons.[130] These authors have stressed the crucial roles of societal reactions, peer group associations, and opportunity in the stabilization of criminal careers.

Clinard and Quinney: The Career Criminal

Clinard and Quinney have elucidated a number of common characteristics of career criminals. First, persons usually engage in career crime for gain, committing mostly property crimes. In contrast to persons in legitimate occupations, career criminals make part or all of their living by pursuing activities that have been defined as illegal.

---

[125] Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin, pp. 151-158.

[126] *Crimes of Violence*, p. 553.

[127] Ibid., p. 554.

[128] See, for example, Richard A. Peterson, David J. Pittman, and Patricia O'Neal, "Stabilities in Deviance: A Study of Assaultive and Non-Assaultive Offenders," *Journal of Criminal Law and Police Science*, Vol. 53, March 1962, pp. 44-48.

[129] The literature on this issue is reviewed by Roger Hood and Richard Sparks, *Key Issues in Criminology*, World University Library, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1970.

[130] Clinard and Quinney, *Criminal Behavior Systems*; Donald C. Gibbons, *Changing the Lawbreakers*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965.

Second, criminal activity is part of the way of life of the career offender. He perceives himself as a criminal and associates extensively with other criminals. Career progression involves the acquisition of more complex techniques, more frequent offenses, and, ultimately, dependence on crime as a partial or the sole means of livelihood.

Third, persons in career crime tend either to develop a pattern of property violations or to specialize in a particular kind of offense.

Fourth, career criminals engage in systematic behavior that requires both personal and social organization. The violations of career criminals are not the result of personal conflicts and immediate circumstances, as are those of noncareer criminals. Career criminals plan their crimes and are aware of what they are doing. Career criminals depend on the assistance of other criminals and may participate in an organization. Given the nature and degree of involvement in professional crime, it is possible to make it a lifetime career, with increasing isolation from the legitimate work patterns of society.

Gibbons: "Heavies" and Semiprofessionals

A number of attempts have been made to develop a systematic typology of property offenders. Gibbons says, "Professional heavy criminals who engage in robberies and burglaries of various kinds are distinguished from semiprofessional property offenders and 'one-time loser' property criminals who also engage in robberies and related offenses. One major basis for separating these offender role careers is that the three vary markedly in terms of the criminal expertise demonstrated by the respective role incumbents."[131] However, "the distinction between professional 'heavy' criminals and semiprofessional property offenders is actually one of degree rather than kind. The dividing line between professional and semiprofessional property offenders is somewhat arbitrary. On the whole, professional 'heavies' are highly competent lawbreakers who reap large sums of money from their illegal activities and work at this occupation full-time. Semiprofessionals tend to be relatively unskilled, poorly paid for their criminal endeavors and work at crime in some cases on a part-time basis."[132]

Gibbons defines the career of the professional heavy in terms of offense behavior, interactional setting, self-concept, and attitudes. In addition, he discusses background—social class, family background, peer-group associations—and contact with law enforcement agencies.

In regard to offense behavior, he says:

> Professional heavies engage in armed robbery, burglary and other direct assaults upon property. They are highly skilled at crime, so although the element of coercion and threat of violence is involved, actual force is rarely employed. The modus operandi of professional "heavy" criminals involves a relatively lengthy period of detailed planning prior to the execution of the criminal offense. The semiprofessional property criminal also engages in strong-arm robberies, holdups, burglaries, larcenies and similar direct assaults upon personal or private property. They employ crime skills which are relatively simple and uncomplicated. For example, strong-arm robbery

---

[131] Gibbons, *Changing the Lawbreakers*, p. 230.

[132] Ibid., p. 268.

> does not involve much detailed planning and careful execution of the crime, but rather application of crude physical force in order to relieve a victim of his money. This is referred to as semiprofessional crime, because even though technical skill is not characteristic of these offenders, most of them attempt to carry out crime as an occupation.[133]

The heavies define themselves as criminals and as professionals in crime. They are proud of their specialized skills and view crime as a lucrative and satisfying way of life. Semiprofessionals do not view themselves as professionals in crime; rather, they see few alternatives to their criminal behavior and regard themselves as victims of a corrupt society in which everyone has a racket. They blame the system and so feel no personal guilt.

Gibbons examines at length the role career of the heavies. They normally come from urban, lower-class backgrounds. Most of them begin their criminal careers as delinquents in predatory gangs. The young heavy usually involves himself increasingly with older professionals, from whom he learns the necessary crime skills. Once a professional himself, he is likely to continue committing property offenses into middle age, and many ultimately retire into a noncriminal occupation.

Most adult semiprofessional offenders associated with predatory gangs as juveniles, and many juvenile gang offenders continue in criminality as semiprofessionals. As adults, semiprofessionals rapidly accumulate extensive rap sheets. Because of the low degree of skill involved in semiprofessional crime, the risks of apprehension, conviction, and incarceration are high. Many of them spend a con- siderable part of their early adult years in penal institutions, where they are likely to be identified as "right guys" or antiadministration inmates. It does not appear that conventional treatment efforts are successful in deflecting many of these persons from continuing in crime. On the other hand, many of them ultimately do withdraw from criminal careers when they reach early middle age.

Gibbons describes the peer-group experiences of the heavies:

> As a juvenile, this type of offender was involved in interaction within the structure of delinquent gangs or differential association with delinquent peers. In some cases these delinquent peers form a recognizable gang, whereas in others they represent a loose confederation of offenders. . . . The peer structure provided him with group support for his hostile and cynical attitudes. The peer structure also provided social rewards for prowess in delinquent acts, in that peers often accorded high status to the most delinquent boys.[134]

Heavies and semiprofessionals have similar relationships with their peers. However, semiprofessionals usually associate mostly with other relatively unskilled offenders.

The contact with defining agencies is also similar in both types:

> The early adult history of these offenders is likely to show several commitments to penal institutions. Commonly, some of the criminal skills exhibited by the person were acquired in this learning environment. As the developing professional acquires expertise in deviance and becomes more enmeshed in the world of professional criminality, prison becomes an occupational hazard which he infrequently encounters. Accordingly, the correc-

---

[133] Ibid., p. 273.

[134] Ibid., p. 274.

tional machinery has an insignificant effect upon mature professional "heavy" criminals.[135]

The adult semiprofessionals spend major portions of their lives in penal institutions, and contacts they have with defining agencies are thought to contribute to their criminal careers.

---

[135] Ibid., p. 275.

Appendix C

THE USE OF SELF-REPORTED CRIME DATA

Because of the reliance of this study on the respondents' own reports of their criminality, in addition to their official records, it is useful to examine the validity of this source of data.

TRADITIONAL APPROACH

Traditionally, the criminal justice system has relied exclusively on data that are recorded about persons who are processed by the system. It has long been recognized that official data are biased as a result of: (1) the lack of uniform methods of reporting and recording crime data; (2) the unevenness of law enforcement with respect to different racial and socioeconomic groups and geographic regions; and (3) their being limited to offenders who become involved in the legal-reactive process. Recognition of these deficiencies has prompted many researchers to obtain data by self-reporting instruments in order to assess the true extent of crime.[136]

Perhaps the most serious limitation of official records, for our purposes, is that crime, arrest, clearance, prosecution, and conviction rates do not suffice for a systematic tracking of criminal careers. This is especially so because relatively few criminal acts lead to arrest. Evidence of widespread crime by persons who are never, or only rarely, caught by the law has long been publicized. This appears to be true for adult as well as juvenile criminals. By one estimate, only about three to five percent of the delinquent behavior that occurs is detected.[137]. Studies of the adult population draw a similar picture. Wallerstein and Wyle found that 99 percent of a sample of New York adults reported that after the age of 16 they had committed one or more of a list of 49 offenses listed in the criminal code of New York State. Furthermore, 64 percent of the male and 29 percent of the female respondents admitted that they had committed a felony.[138] As the arrest rate is much smaller than those numbers, the findings of such work demonstrate that the amount of crime that comes to the attention of the police is much smaller than the actual amount.

---

[136] A bibliography of American studies of criminal behavior conducted before 1965 is found in Robert H. Hardt and George E. Bodine, *Development of Self-Report Instruments in Delinquency Research*, Youth Development Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y., 1965. Additional questionnaire studies include Austin L. Porterfield, *Young in Trouble* Leo Potishman Fund, Fort Worth, Tex., 1946); James S. Wallerstein and Clement J. Wyle, "Our Law-Abiding Law-Breakers," *Probation*, Vol. 25, March-April 1947, pp. 107-112; John F. Scott, "Two Measures of Reported Delinquent Behavior," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 30, August 1965, pp. 573-576; Lamar T. Empey and Maynard L. Erickson, "Hidden Delinquency and Social Status," *Social Forces*, Vol. 44, June 1966, pp. 546-554; Edmund Vaz, "Self-Reported Juvenile Delinquency and Socio-Economic Status," *Canadian Journal of Corrections*, Vol. 8, January 1966, pp. 20-27; and R. A. Kettel, *A Comparative Study of Detected and Undetected Violational Behavior among Students and Inmates*, Florida Division of Corrections, Research and Statistics Section, Study 67-3, April 1967. Interviews were used in Martin Gold, "Undetected Delinquent Behavior," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, Vol. 3, January 1966, pp. 27-46.

[137] **Gold, "Undetected Delinquent Behavior."**

[138] **"Our Law-Abiding Law-Breakers."**

Given our focus on criminal career development, the discrepancy between actual crime commissions and those for which an arrest occurs was simply too great to rely on official records alone. We could not have accurately determined offenders' criminal activity patterns, and thus could not have properly distinguished among the offenders.[139] And because the charge for which an offender was arrested might not have accurately reflected the crime he committed, the patterns would have been distorted further. Reliance on self-report data was thus inescapable. Moreover, the use of self-report data seemed to offer advantages of new insights. As a recent study has asserted:

> The investigation of unregistered criminality will, even if it does not bring about any revolution in the general outlook on crime and criminals, certainly challenge some of the established dogmas of present-day criminology. . . . In general, it is to be expected that the study of unregistered criminality will invigorate criminology by applying a new tool of investigation and by illuminating many traditional problems of criminality from a new perspective.[140]

SELF-REPORTING METHODS

The use of self-reported data is not without its own methodological problems. The reliability and validity of deviants' reports have long been questioned. First, when a respondent admits to having committed an offense, is his answer accurate? Was his act actually a crime? It has been shown that people in different social classes are likely to view crime differently.[141] For example, what one class regards as assault may be considered normal behavior by another class. Second, to what extent is this reporting method reliable? Are many offenses concealed? Do respondents exaggerate their criminal behavior? How reliable are their estimates of the frequency with which they committed crimes, especially when they are asked to recall their behavior over considerable periods—occasionally a lifetime?[142]

To overcome these problems, two self-reporting methods have been developed. The one used most often is to ask the respondents to fill out—with complete anonymity—a questionnaire about the type and frequency of their offenses. The second method is to interview the individual offenders, asking probing questions about the details of each criminal act, when it happened, how often, and whether or not it was detected by authorities.

There is no firm evidence that the interview method is superior to the self-completed questionnaire. For our study, however, the interview method was preferable; we hoped to reduce errors due to poor motivation, poor reading, and poor comprehension. The interviewers were encouraged to elicit the details of an offense in order to establish whether a crime was actually committed, to question possible exaggerations, and to clear up misunderstandings. Given the complexity of the information we sought, it would have been difficult to use a self-administered instrument. As was recently pointed out:

---

[139] Maynard L. Erickson and Lamar T. Empey, "Court Records, Undetected Delinquency and Decision-making," *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science*, Vol. 54, December 1963, pp. 456-459.

[140] Roger Hood and Richard Sparks, *Key Issues in Criminology*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1970, p. 47.

[141] Gold, "Undetected Delinquent Behavior," p. 30.

[142] An excellent discussion of the methodological difficulties of self-reporting appears in Hood and Sparks, *Key Issues*, pp. 64-70.

> It is clear that the interview method is preferable for certain purposes, especially when the inquiry is concerned to classify crime in terms of seriousness and frequency. A seriousness scale must be based on an assessment of the actual circumstances of the offense, and the frequency counts, relying on memory as they do, can be checked more thoroughly through the searching promptings of an interview. If questions are asked about a restricted number of items, the interviewer can aid the respondent considerably in problems of recall. It is suggested that in the self-completion situation either he will simply guess an approximate number or plump for a simple category such as "occasionally" or "frequently."[143]

Those who object to the interview method frequently do so on the grounds that it precludes the respondent's anonymity. However, the desirability of anonymity in criminological research is not clearly established by the empirical evidence. Hyman has cautioned that the "literal fact of anonymity provides no necessary psychological anonymity," and some criminologists have concluded that anonymity is unnecessary, overemphasized, or of little consequence.[144]

Nevertheless, it is important for the respondent to know that the information he gives will be held in strict confidence. In our study, each interviewee was given verbal and written assurance that the interview was solely for research purposes and that his responses would not jeopardize him.

VALIDITY OF THE SELF-REPORTED DATA IN THIS STUDY

The questions in our interview instrument asked the 49 respondents to recall the number of times they committed each of nine representative types of offenses during each of three contiguous periods in their criminal careers. For these offenses they were also asked to recall the number of times they were arrested and were convicted.

To verify some of the interview information, we obtained the state and federal criminal justice records for each of the interviewees. Before the interviews, we recorded the date that each period of incarceration exceeding 60 days began. One purpose was to identify the dates of the three career periods for each interviewee. At the opening of an interview, we asked the respondent to confirm each period of incarceration we had recorded from his rap sheet and to supply information on how long each of the incarcerations lasted. This review helped to refresh the respondent's memory about the order of events in his past, and it also diminished the "halo effect" in his response, since it made him aware that we had knowledge of some of the entries on his official record.

The crime matrix used in the interview covered the respondent's offenses, arrests, and convictions, not incarcerations.

After the interviews, as a validity check, we returned to the respondents' rap sheets and compared the recorded information—dates of arrest, the charges, and whether a conviction resulted—with the corresponding information from the respondent. Each self-reported arrest or conviction was considered "validated" only if the official record showed an arrest or conviction for the same crime type between the dates we had identified as the beginning and end of each career period.

---

[143] Ibid., p. 60.

[144] Cited in J. Ball, "The Reality and Validity of Interview Data Obtained from 59 Narcotic Drug Addicts," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 62, 1967, p. 650.

The Overall Validity of the Response

The 47 offenders for whom rap sheets could be obtained reported a total of 239 arrests over their entire careers for the nine offense types. By comparison, their rap sheets showed 364 arrests for these offense types. Therefore, the offenders reported 63 percent of the arrests contained on their official records.

The offenders reported a total of 185 convictions for the nine offense types. By comparison, their rap sheets showed a total of 245 convictions from arrests for these offense types, with 206 resulting in incarceration of more than 60 days. Comparing these data, we found that the number of self-reported convictions was 74 percent of the official number, and 88 percent of the number ending in significant incarceration (and therefore more memorable). This favorable comparison is somewhat weakened when we examine individual career periods.

Juvenile convictions were considerably underreported on rap sheets since juvenile arrests are typically not recorded there (except for those that end in reformatory incarcerations). This was confirmed by the interviewees, who reported 69 convictions for the nine offense types during the juvenile career period, while their rap sheets showed only 23.

In order to correct for this systematic bias, we deleted both the self-reported and rap sheet data pertaining to the juvenile period from the analyses concerning crime types.

We compared the total number of arrests and convictions the offender reported for the two adult career periods with those appearing in his official records. For those two periods, the offenders were found to have reported roughly half of their official arrests and convictions.

Validity By Crime Type and Gender of Interviewer

By Crime Type. The use of self-report techniques raises the issue of whether some types of deviant behavior are likely to be underreported or overreported in personal interviews. Previous research has suggested that reporting bias depends on the gravity of the offense. Gold (1966) found overreporting of trivial offenses, and Farrington (1973) observed underreporting of serious offenses. This is consistent with earlier work by Clark and Tifft (1966), which showed that offenses thought to be "never permissible were underreported."[145] The explanation is that if the respondent wants to present himself in the best light, he will underreport the more stigmatizing offenses.

However, some recent research has contradicted this notion. Respondents have been found to underreport *less* stigmatizing offenses to a greater degree than more stigmatizing ones. As a possible explanation, one author has suggested:

---

[145] Gold, "Undetected Delinquent Behavior"; D. Farrington, "Self-Reports of Deviant Behavior: Predictive and Stable?" *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science*, Vol. 64, 1973, pp. 99-110; John P. Clark and Larry L. Tifft, "Polygraph and Interview Validation of Self-Reported Deviant Behavior," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 31, No. 4, August 1966, pp. 516-523.

> . . . this result may occur because people are not willing to lie about unambiguous facts. However, behaviors which are ambiguous as to their definition of offenses, and which are engaged in frequently so that their number is difficult to remember, may well be subject to self-enhancing definitions in threatening situations. The occasions in which a person takes money from someone by force are probably remembered fairly clearly. To fail to report these offenses would require a knowing outright lie on the part of the respondents.[146]

The explanation above is consistent with other studies showing that both the importance of an event to an individual and its integration with other life events affect his reporting of them.

We examined our data for the presence of over- and underreporting of particular crime types. For this sample of offenders, robbery and rape were the crimes most accurately reported in the interviews. For robbery, the validity rate was 62 percent, and for rape, greater than 100 percent (rape was overreported by one conviction). Burglary and forgery also had relatively high validity rates—53 percent. The least accurately reported crime types were also the least serious offenses —grand larceny, aggravated assault, and auto theft.

Therefore, our results generally support the proposition that offenses that are less serious and less consequential for the offender will be less accurately reported.

By Gender of Interviewer. Nearly every discussion in the literature about conducting interviews cautions about the biasing effects of the interviewer's gender. It is expected that a male or female interviewer will introduce unique forms of error, simply because the rapport established in the interview is likely to differ depending upon the sex of the respondent and the interviewer. Unfortunately, results concerning the direction of the error are inconsistent. Some researchers have shown that women interviewers tend to receive more puritanical and socially desirable answers from both men and women.[147] Other researchers have found women interviewers equally effective as men interviewers.[148]

None of the studies just cited referred to interviews in which criminality data were solicited. Moreover, none of the respondents in those studies were incarcerated. Because this study solicited criminality data from prison inmates, we might expect the respondent-interviewer interaction to be more complex. Felons may be more concerned with presenting a "macho" image in front of other men; if so, they may exaggerate their criminal behavior. On the other hand, they may be anxious for approval, especially from women, so they may conceal their criminality in front of them. We explored these issues in our data.

Our interview staff consisted of three women and three men. All were white, similar in education level, socioeconomic status, and interview training. We compared the validity scores of the respondents interviewed by the men with those

[146] K. Tielman, *Self-Report Criminality and Interviewer Effects*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1977.

[147] H. H. Hyman, W. J. Cobb, J. J. Feldman, C. W. Hart, and C. H. Stember, *Interviewing in Social Research*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1954; J. Colombotos, J. Elinson, and R. Loewenstein, "Effect of Interviewers' Sex on Interview Responses," *Public Health Reports*, Vol. 83, No. 8, 1968 (8), pp. 685-690; I. Cisin, *An Experimental Study of Sensitivity of Survey Techniques in Measuring Drinking Practices*, Social Research Project, George Washington University, 1965; R. Loewenstein and A. Varma, *Effect of Interaction of Interviewer and Respondent in Health Surveys*, Paper given at AAPOR, May 1970.

[148] W. B. Pomeroy, "The Reluctant Respondent," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1963, pp. 287-293.

interviewed by the women. The average validity of the former was 58 percent; of the latter, 57 percent. Analysis of the results by quartile groupings also revealed no significant differences in the validity scores.

These findings suggest that this sample of incarcerated felons was equally truthful, whether they were being interviewed by a man or woman.

☆ U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1978 260-992/2179